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[December 1953—February, 1959

A STUDY OF MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN NORTH INDIA

ARTHUR NIEHOFF

This is an analysis of matrimonial advertisements which appeared in North Indian newspapers during August–March 1953–54. The majority of the advertisements analyzed appeared in *The National Herald* of Lucknow and *The Hindustan Times* of Delhi. The remainder came from *The Times of India* of Delhi and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Allahabad. All are newspapers printed in English.

The literates in India make up approximately 18 per cent of the total population (Almanac 1954), and of this figure the majority read non-English newspapers. The advertisers of the four papers used would comprise a sample of a group that is less than ten per cent of the total Indian population. It would of course be useful and interesting to know if similar advertisements occur in the vernacular newspapers but unfortunately due to the press of time and other research commitments I collected none of these.

The advertisers of this sample were highly educated people, the majority having college degrees. Most were in high income brackets, there being included among the advertisers two millionaires. In terms of social prestige the occupations were high, the largest single group being made up of government civil service workers. The other advertisers were mostly professional or businessmen. All these qualities can be considered in another way as the degree of westernization. The educational system is a direct legacy of the British, while most of the occupations which are found in these advertisements such as civil service, military service, medicine, law, and even modern business, have been either established or dominantly influenced by the British.

Most of these advertisers are individuals from the "progressive" element of Indian society as contrasted to the orthodox, those who are interested in retaining pre-British Indian standards. It will be noted later that marriage between castes was not infrequently considered in these advertisements; while among a group of almost 200 men of the lowest socio-economic class that I interviewed in

another study, not a single case of inter-caste marriage was found or considered.

The group included in this analysis differs from the general Indian population in yet another way. Almost all of them lived in urban centers. About 83 per cent of all Indians live in villages (India 1953: 6). But as in the West, it is in the Indian city that most change takes place. The city was the residential center of the British administrators. Also the majority of educated Indians prefer the urban community. In fact, one of the current problems of the Indian government is to get college-trained people, particularly medical doctors, to work in the villages.

Matrimonial advertisements in India are contained in all the English language newspapers which I have seen. Most of the problems faced in Indian marriages today appear in these listings, particularly the stresses occurring because of western influence. This, of course, is one of the major challenges that all social institutions now face in India.

The advertising is done ususally by the parents since only the most extremely westernized young person will attempt to arrange his own marriage. The economic class of the individual seeking a mate is of great importance, as it is in the West. This creates some problems in finding a spouse. Also there are caste restrictions, which among some groups, are so narrow that a particular individual is permitted to marry into only a handful of families. The high caste Hindu normally belongs to an endogamous sub-caste and an exogamous subdivision, the *gotra*, within the sub-caste. There are further subdivisions, however, such as a moiety system within the *gotra* or a division of the *gotra* into exogamous families (*Kul*), which among some high castes are further divided into three endogamous classes (Blunt 1931: 49). Furthermore, there are prohibited degrees of relationship, the most common prohibition being six degrees from a common ancestor on the male side and four on the female (Blunt 1931: 60). In one case reported to me in Northern India, a man's choice was limited to only two possible families into which he could marry. Also I was in a village in northern Uttar Pradesh in which a serious problem existed among the Brahmans because of their inability to find enough mates from the proper marital group. Many of these Brahman males remained unmarried while carrying on illicit relations with lower caste women of the village.

The narrow limits of the group into which each individual can marry seem to be the most important stimulus for utilizing newspapers in this way. Illiterates, of course, do not use this system for acquiring mates because they can't read the newspapers. The fact that some of the upper class people resort to this method of arranging marriages may also reflect their smaller numbers in contrast

to the low class illiterate majority. Individuals of the proper marital group would simply be more difficult to locate as long as they had to be obtained from within this small socio-economic class. It might be supposed that, as in the United States, persons in India who turn to newspaper advertisements for mates are rather desperate after having passed the normal age for marriage. However the years specified in the advertisements do not seem to indicate extremely advanced ages. The average age for the majority of males was 25 while that of females was 21. This is later than the normal marriage age in India but the variation might to a large extent be a product of class differences.

The group dealt with in this paper is made up of 213 advertisements for Hindus. There were 23 entries by Sikhs, Jains, and Muslims in this sample from the same newspapers, but since the numbers of these three groups were so small, they were not included in the main analysis.

In order to provide the reader with an idea of the type of information given in these advertisements, two are quoted :

“WANTED : A beautiful, fair colored, educated bride from a good family for a handsome young Srivastava Dushera promising youth, age 25 years doing excellent business, earning Rs. 400/500 per month. Apply Box No.....”

“A SUITABLE match preferably a gazetted officer for a beautiful, tall, highly educated, music graduate girl (23), belonging to highly respectable Bisa Agarwal Singhal Gotra family. Please write Box.....”

The advertisements are treated by assuming that those qualities listed are considered the most important in selecting a mate. This does not mean that no more detailed information would be required before a match was agreed upon. When the caste is stated and not the *gotra*, it would appear safe to assume that no marriage would take place without the caste requirement being fulfilled though it is possible that the *gotra* would be overlooked. There is the possibility that certain traits such as virginity in women, women's domestic achievements, and health are taken for granted. The information contained in the advertisements is limited by space and the cost per word or line. All qualities desired could not be included. Consequently, it can be assumed that except for qualities which might be taken for granted, the ones appearing in these advertisements are the most important in selecting a mate. Interviews of these advertisers would provide much information bearing on this point but this I was not able to do for reasons mentioned previously.

RELIGION. The most common specification for a mate was religion. Out of 237 advertisements, including the religious groups other than Hindu, there was only one which did not list any religion, either his own or that of the prospective bride. This advertisement was put

in by a young man who specified no caste prejudice and presumably he would have accepted a girl from another religious group.

There were two instances among Sikhs in which girls would accept Hindu grooms. One was a listing for two girls from Kenya in East Africa, who were advertising for husbands in India. In Africa, as in other areas outside India where Indians have settled, caste and religious barriers probably are not so strong as they are in India. Among the Trinidad Hindus marriage between castes is quite common and the only real strong feeling against inter-caste marriage is between those of the highest and lowest castes. Also in Trinidad marriages between Hindus, Muslims and Christians not infrequently occur.

Then too, though Sikhs do operate on a modified caste basis, they are not so rigidly controlled by the regulations. According to the tenets of their religion, caste is prohibited, though even as the Muslims have developed caste divisions in India, so also have the Sikhs. The Hindu scavengers of the Punjab (Chuhra) when converting to Sikhism become *Mazhbis*, when converting to Islam, *Musallis*. As scavengers, however, the converts are not permitted full social equality with either Sikhs or Muslims (Rose 1919 : 182). It is of interest to note that some of the caste preferences of non-Hindus came out in the advertisements. Sikhs advertised for Ahluwalia, Arora and Sodhi mates, a Jain advertised for a Digamber mate, a Muslim for a Syed Sunni and an Arya Samajist for a Saraswat Brahman.

Of course, there are possibilities that a few others in the sample would not have objected to persons of other religious groups, since the majority advertised simply by giving their own religion, caste, and/or sub-caste and requesting "suitable" mates. It seems clear, however, that inter-religious marriages will not be a phenomenon of this group until inter-caste marriage becomes common.

CASTE. The second most frequently mentioned quality in the selection of a mate was his or her caste. Of the 213 advertisements, 183 were listed either stating the required caste, sub-caste, or *gotra* of the mate, or else simply giving the caste of the advertiser and requesting a suitable match. The others mentioned neither the caste nor the family names, though they listed other qualities. Those who did not mention caste at all, or who stated that there would no be caste restrictions, were more numerous among the men. Fourteen per cent of the men advertisers did not mention caste while only five per cent of the women's listings lacked this specification.

Of course, here again it is well to emphasize that we are dealing primarily with family attitudes rather than individual opinions. It is the girl's family who insists on caste for her mate.

My observations in North India run parallel to the results derived from these advertisements. I have known several cases in Lucknow

and Kanpur in which the husband, who had a college education, tried very hard to bring his wife more into his social world without any success. Quite often the husband from a vegetarian family will eat meat while the wife remains strictly orthodox in her refusal to participate. And while college educated men in the city have no hesitation about wearing western clothing, their wives will almost never wear European dresses. The only exception to this pattern is among the Anglo-Indian women. This conservatism in dress is noticeable in the Indian students who go abroad. The men, almost without exception, abandon their native *dhoties* and *pajamas* while the women retain their *saris*. Men, of course, have been for many years in much closer contact with westerners and have received more western education than women. Also conservatism of women in pre-British India was pronounced because of the purdah system and general seclusion.

As was mentioned before, inter-caste marriage usually can take place on this high socio-economic level. Among industrial labourers with whom I worked it just does not occur. When an individual or his family achieves high economic status, he is able to transgress caste regulations without too much of punishment. Many of the factory workers among whom I worked recognized this impunity of the wealthy. There were among them some who, if left to their own choice, would also have taken mates from other castes. One industrial laborer that I interviewed, if he had been able, would have married not only a woman of a lower caste, but also would have accepted a widow. He was 36 years old and of a high caste but had broken away from his caste people in the village and come to the city to work. He had tried to get his caste people to help him and also tried independently to get a wife in the city, all to no avail. He had become involved in some difficulties in his village, including a murder. Fleeing from the village he had come to Kanpur to work in a factory. Later he had tried to get assistance in his village in obtaining a wife, but his people would not help him. He then tried independently to find a wife in the city. As a result of this endeavour he lost money to match-makers several times without coming any closer to getting a wife. At the time I talked to him he had resigned himself to remain a bachelor.

It is also well to remember that those of high economic status move in a social circle that is considerably westernized, which means that many caste regulations are regarded as unprogressive. Many high government officials, besides various groups who are fighting for equal rights for "backward" or untouchable castes, advocate inter-caste marriage as a solution to the problem of tension between castes. Consequently, the members of this highly educated social level, from which these policies came, should be more tolerant toward cases of inter-caste marriage in their own social group.

Below the caste are the sub-caste and *gotra*. Here there was, as expected, the greatest amount of change. Of those advertisers who gave caste specifications for the mate, less than one-fourth insisted on caste subdivisions. It was quite common in the advertisements to specify that the sub-caste was not important. For example, "Wanted a suitable match for a beautiful 16 year old Saksena Dusrey girl reading in Intermediate. No sub-caste restrictions..."

Or, "Match for a beautiful accomplished Saxena Kayastha girl, M.A. Lecturer in Degree College. Sub-caste no bar..."

The change then in marital restriction among these advertisers is primarily on the level of the sub-caste and *gotra*. Only 22 per cent of this group specified sub-caste and *gotra* as necessary criteria for marriage, 87 per cent specified caste, while 99 per cent requested same religion for the spouse.

EDUCATION. The criterion of greatest importance for choosing a mate after caste and religion was educational level. The men considered their own educational level about equally important to that of their prospective mates. That is, men advertisers requested girls of high education as often as they mentioned their own high educational qualifications. On the other hand, 83 per cent of the women gave their own high educational level while asking for a high level of education in only 19 per cent of the prospective grooms. It was evidently believed that a good education would improve their chances for marriage. This difference between the male and female may be due to the great variance between the sexes in India, and the need for the girls to convince their would-be mates that they were modern women.

Inter-caste marriage can be considered as at least partially a product of western ideas even though attempts at reforming the caste system are known to be as old as the Buddha. Most such reform, however, has been concentrated on the inequalities of the caste system. To advocate complete inter-caste marriage would demand great changes in the entire social system. Higher education in India, on the other hand, though even more directly produced by western ideas, produces no obviously apparent conflict with the present social system. Education is merely something added.

The fact that more girls than men listed high educational qualifications gives no indication of the actual educational level of the two groups. Men of all class levels in India are more highly educated than women.

One other educational factor appeared in the advertisements, viz., foreign education or foreign travel. Foreign degrees give high status to the possessor, as does foreign travel to a lesser degree. This is a departure from orthodoxy that has been steadily increasing in importance in the last 150 years. For among the Brahmans at

least, there has been a traditional prohibition against leaving the sub-continent of India. And the Brahmans are probably the most highly educated caste group in India. According to Useem, travel outside of India for an education was limited prior to 1900 (Useem 1955 : 2). It is assumed by the orthodox that the average young man will not live abroad without transgressing caste rules, particularly food taboos. In my opinion this belief is fairly well justified even though there are a few individuals who certainly do remain constant, which usually means remaining vegetarian. The former purification rite necessary for having travelled overseas was the drinking of a mixture (*panch gavya*) composed of the five products of the cow : milk, curds, *ghi*, urine, and dung (Hutton 1951 : 88). Though this practice has mostly been given up, there are still objections to overseas travel by the orthodox. In the city of Kanpur the Kanyakubja Brahmans have divided into two schisms on the issue of going abroad. Less than five years ago, one young man was compelled to go through an involved series of cleansing rites, including a pilgrimage and the payment of a fine to his caste, in order to be reinstated for having gone abroad. On the other hand, it is widely recognized that foreign education, particularly in the sciences, is much superior to that which can be obtained in India. Also there is a definite economic value derived from a foreign degree.

In this group of advertisers two men and one woman included their foreign education as qualities for attracting mates. Also one man was advertised as having been abroad while two mentioned that they were going abroad. One Hindu man in search of a wife specifically requested a girl who would be willing to go abroad.

There were two cases in which high educational level was not wanted. These male advertisers asked for moderately educated girls, which probably indicates an attempt to retain some of the older values. Modernity and change could be expected results from a college education.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE. Third in importance according to the frequency of listings was personal appearance. Women's looks were much more highly valued than men's. Eighty-one per cent of the advertisements referring to female characteristics listed beauty in one way or another. These advertisements constituted the listings of men who gave desired qualifications for prospective wives and of women who listed their own qualifications. In only 23 per cent of the advertisements referring to men were beauty or handsomeness listed as desired qualities.

A variety of adjectives were used to describe physical appearance, indicating most probably the expectation level of the mate-seeker, based on his or her own qualifications. To describe a woman, these ranged from "beautiful," down through "handsome," "pretty,"

"goodlooking," and "homely." Some of the more specific appearance qualifications provided more interesting information. A light-colored skin was highly desired in women. Eighteen per cent of the total appearance listings for women were for fair or light-colored skins while no one asked for a dark complexioned person. Two men even asked for white complexions, an impossibility, of course, if they were using European skins as their standard. The women, giving their own qualities, listed lightness of skin twice as much as did men listing for prospective brides. This again is probably a similar case to that of education among women. The women evidently emphasized a quality they believed men were interested in.

This preference for light-skinned girls is a problem recognized by governmental officials. In an editorial of the Lucknow *National Herald*, in September, 1954, Rajagopalachari, Chief Minister of Madras, was reported to have called on Hindu men not to discriminate against dark-skinned girls since, he argued, they were generally more intelligent and harder working than light-skinned girls. Also since the majority of Indian girls were dark, there just were not enough light-skinned girls to go around. This bias against dark skins prevails clear through to the lowest economic stratum of society. It is believed by most Indians that darkness of skin indicates a lower caste position. It is possible that the color prejudice of the conquering westerners in India has reinforced a bias which was in existence since the time of the Aryan invasion. Also a light skin in women is considered by Indians as an indication of leisured life. Low caste men in Kanpur, in their criticism of high caste discrimination, insisted that before they came to the city they and their wives were dark because they and their ancestors were compelled to do all the field and other outside work.

Tallness and slimness were valued traits in the advertisements. Many Indians regard a tall stature as very desirable, the people of the Punjab being envied for their tallness.

Male appearance was not listed so often as female appearance. However, the men listed their own appearance twice as often as the women asked for it in prospective husbands. Other qualities were listed more often for men, particularly such attributes as salary, occupation, and the men's families. Beyond the generalized beauty value, such as handsomeness and good appearance, fairness of skin and tallness appeared for men as they did for women. Males advertised their own fairness and tallness, though no woman among the group asked for either quality.

AGE. After appearance came age in the importance gradient. Eighty-five per cent of the men marrying were between 21 and 29 years while the women they wanted were from 17 to 25. About the same figures prevailed for women marrying, with 81 per cent

of the women being 17 to 25 and their desired mates 21 to 29. This indicates a unanimity of values between sexes in age preferences; the man should be about 25 years old, and the women 21, a four year difference.

According to the Abbe Dubois, a young Brahman male should have married by the age of 16 while his wife should have been, at the most, nine years old (Dubois 1906: 212). This was in the early nineteenth century and gives some indication of Hindu marital age previous to the British intrusion. The advertisers of this group, in contrast, were expecting to marry at about the same age as Americans. According to Burgess and Wallin (1951: 19) the mean age for Americans at the time of marriage is 22.6 for men and 20.4 for women.

There was a small group of middle-aged men and women advertisers who were looking for older mates. Among these were five widowers and four widows. High caste Hindu widows usually do not remarry. It is significant that not only did they advertise (they constituted five per cent of the women in this sample), but they were being asked for by men. There were none who requested virgin widows, though as will be indicated later, virginity is a quality that was requested by some men for mates who had not previously been married. However, one young Khattri (age 34) did ask for "a rich issueless young widow or virgin of respectable family". He seemed ready to accept a widow who was not necessarily a virgin. However, the majority of men, who requested a widow, specified that they should have no children.

FAMILY STATUS. After age the most often listed qualification was high family status. Men and women were about equally concerned with this attribute, the percentages being 30 and 27 respectively. The advertisements for women emphasized their own family qualities though they were less interested in the men's families. The family quality most often listed by men, both in their own family and in that of their prospective brides, was respectability. The women, on the other hand, emphasized economic position and high social status of the family. Of course, men also valued economic position, although second to respectability, listing such monetary attributes in themselves as "rich" "millionaire", "father a landholder," and "highly connected" and asking for girls with families "well-to-do," "high," and "rich."

Vegetarianism was also stated in a few of the advertisements as a necessary family quality. This indicates a weakness in caste discipline since vegetarianism is usually not a matter of personal choice but a caste rule. Thus when caste is stated, and it is still necessary to indicate vegetarianism, it implies that the caste is not functioning as a consistent group of individuals.

AREA PREFERENCE. The category of sixth importance was preference for a mate from a specific area of India. Twenty-two

per cent of the advertisers either considered this a trait important enough to list for themselves or else wanted a mate from a certain area. The Punjab was the area in highest demand, with just about half the total listings.

Punjabis are greatly admired in the U.P. for their large size and comparative lightness of skin. Also almost all the Punjabis who left their home territory during the partition riots look back with fond memories to their former homeland. The refugees from these riots have undoubtedly swelled the figures of those who prefer Punjabi people. Those who left the Punjab at the time of the riots would have had their local relationships disrupted. To these people newspaper advertising would have offered a substitute for the more traditional ways of finding a mate.

OCCUPATION. This category applied primarily to men, following preference according to area. Sixty-two per cent of the men mentioned their occupation in the advertisements while only 11 per cent of the women mentioned their employment. This, however, is undoubtedly a high percentage for working women in India, reflecting the high educational level and progressiveness of the group. The Hindu men of this group were really looking for working girls since only two men (two per cent) requested women with occupations. Both of these were for female doctors. The women were fairly specific in their requests for men's occupations. Over half of their requests were for officers or employees in the civil service. This was fairly realistic since just a little less than half of the employed men that advertised were in civil service. All other occupations requested or stated were professional, since there would have been a strong incentive to mention occupation if the position was high.

MANNERS AND BEHAVIOR. Manners, accomplishments, and temperament were eighth in importance though these were considered primarily feminine traits. While 27 per cent of the women in describing themselves had listings in these categories only three per cent of the men did. In all the advertisements for husbands only one woman used this category when she asked for "good habits" in the man. For women, "cultured and accomplished" were the most popular attributes since they are very generalized. After these came proficiency in music and singing, traits which women traditionally are supposed to possess. They fit into the complex of domestic achievements, along with sewing and household affairs, and are the beginning of a source of conflict for the modern educated woman in India, who is expected to be both efficient at home while at the same time being well educated and taking part in outside activities. This is a conflict in which our own western society has already become deeply involved, and which in India is just beginning on this high social level. After music and singing, qualities which were deemed

important included "good temper," "decent," "well-behaved," "gentle," "talented," and "modest".

SALARY. This trait entered into consideration after manners and behavior and was completely male-linked. While there were a small number of girls who listed their work, and an even smaller number of requests by men for working girls, no woman was so advanced in a feeling of equality as to state her salary. Over half the men who gave their salaries earned 400-1,000 (\$84.00-\$210.00) rupees per month. This would be at the very top of the middle class and into the upper class in India. Again, however, as with occupation, the average salary of those who advertised would probably be somewhat lower than the above figure, since if the salary were high, incentive to advertise it would be strong.

HEALTH. Surprisingly close to the bottom of the list was health. It is one of the most practical considerations possible and one which would seem to deserve considerable attention where arranged marriages are the norm and the older members of the community make the selections. Health was listed much less frequently than manners and behavior, and far below appearance, which was third in frequency. Though of course the health of the mate would have to be taken into consideration, the fact still remains that before considering health, these advertisers wanted to know if the prospective mate was beautiful or handsome. It is possible that the social prestige derived from a good-looking mate over-weighs less obvious physical defects.

DOMESTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS. This Hindu woman, by tradition, is well versed in household affairs and cookery. In this sample, however, domestic accomplishments were held in much lower regard than formal education and the western concept of a woman with a broad world outlook. The women advertisers considered their household accomplishments more important than the men did. Thirty-five per cent of the women listed domestic accomplishments among their attributes while only two per cent of the males specified such qualifications. I knew several cases of Indian men of this same or slightly lower economic class, who wished to have more highly educated wives to whom they could talk about their own problems on their own educational level. In these instances the wives' domestic abilities were lightly considered.

DOWRY. Most of the dowry entries were against excesses of this institution, such as "no dowry," "dowry no consideration," "dowry no bar," and "non-dowry seeker". It is evident that newspaper advertising is used by professional dowry hunters or at least men who want to get an important economic gain out of marriage. This attitude is recognized by the Central Government as one much broader than its use through newspaper advertising. Legislation

was pending during 1953-54 to limit the amounts allowable for dowry, and groups of girls in India were organizing clubs, the members of which were pledged not to give dowry as a marriage inducement.

The men and women in this sample were just about agreed on this matter.

Though again the men advertisers showed more inclination to change, with 18 per cent who listed dowry as "unimportant" or "dowry no bar," twelve per cent of the women had such listings concerning dowries.

VIRGINITY appeared in the advertisements as an exclusively female-linked attribute, though compared to other qualifications was very infrequently mentioned. The women put more emphasis on it than the men, eight and four per cent of the advertisers respectively, listing the trait.

It is a little difficult to interpret the comparative infrequency of listings for virginity. The Hindu bride traditionally is supposed to be a virgin. However in these advertisements this qualification was mentioned the least. It is possible that virginity is taken for granted by most or else it is a quality not to be mentioned in newspapers for reasons of modesty. However the quality was listed by some (6 per cent). It would be presumptuous to conclude that virginity of women is a trait now unimportant in this group. So except for the possibility that in all the cases where virginity is not mentioned it is taken for granted, this quality appears to be less important in the minds of the advertisers than other traits such as caste position, educational level, and physical appearance.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. These marital advertisements indicate the following characteristics. In almost all respects the men of the group were less conservative than the women. More men than women were willing to marry into another caste. The men were less interested than the women in domestic accomplishments, musical and dancing ability, and virginity. Of the four most often specified marital values, two—education and age—have changed during the period of western influence in India. The other two are qualities which would have been basic in former times as well as at the present. These are caste position and personal appearance. Caste remains, at the present day, one of the most important institutions of Hindu Society. And though there are signs of change as far as marriage is concerned, it is significant that caste position in these advertisements still heads the list of desirable qualities in a mate. Historically the caste system has proved itself very adaptable in India, persisting for at least 3,000 years despite the many efforts to eliminate it during this period.

Among the Hindus of Trinidad caste has lost much of its vigor while the traditional concepts of marriage have persisted to a surprising

degree. It may be that caste cannot persist well when the whole society is not organized according to its principles as is the case in Trinidad. That is, caste sanctions cannot be forceful when an individual can enter another sub-culture in case of difficulty.

The differential in attitude between sexes is not too surprising. Women in North India, previous to British rule generally were confined to the home and were not at all expected to become involved in other than domestic affairs. And when western education came into the country, it was the men who received it. The contacts between Indian men and the English have been in existence now for over 150 years, during which time western influence on Indian women has been primarily through the Indian men. Most Indian women have received what western ideas they possess at secondhand and consequently in diluted form.

What now is the ideal marriage among these advertisers? The types derived from these listings would be the ideal rather than the norm, since the qualities mentioned would be the best that a mate seeker possesses or the best that he or she could hope for in a mate. It is logical to expect that the mates received through these advertisements would be somewhat less than ideal.

The most desirable marriage partner first of all should be from the same caste, though the *gotra* would not necessarily matter. The man is more willing to overlook this requirement than the woman. The woman's formal education is of more importance than the traditional accomplishments of households affairs—sewing, knitting, music, and dancing. Physical appearance is important, particularly that of the woman, the most important qualities being lightness of skin, tallness, and slimness. Both tallness and a light skin are also valued in the male. The most desirable age for the men is 25, for the women 21. Respectability is of most importance in the woman's family and high financial status in the man's. The wife will not be expected to work outside the home even though she is expected to be well educated. She is quite interested in the man's occupation, preferring that he be a civil servant, or if not that, an independent professional. She considers his salary very important, hoping it to be about 700 rupees (\$147.00) per month, a high salary in India. He values her manners and behavior, particularly desiring gentleness, modesty, and a good disposition. The woman is not so much interested in the temperamental qualities of the man as the man is with the temperament of the woman. Health is subordinate to physical appearance in the woman, to economic and occupational status in the man. Marriage will be more easily effected if the two are from the same part of India.

In final conclusion it can be said that on the basis of this sample of 213 advertisements, these Indian upper class marital values indicate

a strong emphasis on education. The phenomenon of second greatest importance is the differential in conservativeness between men and women. Marital standards for women emphasize traditional qualities, while the male standards show much more effect of western influence.

APPENDIX

MOST DESIRABLE QUALITIES FOR MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO THE FREQUENCY OF LISTING

Caste Position
 Educational Qualifications
 Physical Appearance
 Age
 Family Status
 Preference According to Area
 Occupational Status (for men only)
 Manners and Behavior (primarily for women)
 Salary (for men only)
 Health
 Domestic Accomplishments (for women only)
 Virginity (for women only)

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THE SECULAR STATUS OF CASTES

JYOTIRMOYEE SARMA

This paper is the outcome of a joint enterprise. The study of four villages in the Burdwan district of West Bengal (India) was undertaken in 1953-1954 by the Burdwan Village Study Project. It was organized by Henry C. Hart of the University of Wisconsin, and at that time a Fellow of the Ford Foundation. The programme of work was drawn out by a board of social scientists in Calcutta¹ of which the writer was a member. The field work was done by Lalit Sen, a young sociologist from the Calcutta University under the supervision of the writer. About two months were spent by him in each of the villages for the field investigation, while the writer spent two to three weeks in each village during the progress of the work. The original tabulation of the field data was done by the Statistical Officer of the Damodar Valley Corporation.

The particular villages were selected with the object of studying the effect of the introduction of the Damodar Valley irrigation and flood control schemes. The villages lie in different sections of Burdwan district. Punyagram is in the irrigation zone, and at the time of the study, the canals were expected to be cut through the village lands. Bigra lies in the Community Development Project area, and although it would receive planned change in many aspects, it would not gain direct benefits from the new irrigation system. The residents of Bigra were, however, aware of the DVC plans, since canals were being dug only five miles from this village. The village Hijauna lies on the other side of the Burdwan town directly across the river Damodar, and gets annual floods. This village was expected to be affected by the flood control scheme. Mudafar-Falahari was selected as a control village. It is in the northern section of the Burdwan district, bordering Nuddea, and receives no benefits from any direct source of organized change.

It was intended by members of the project to study the socio-economic conditions of these villages before the work of the DVC was completed, and to make a repeated study after the irrigation and flood control schemes were introduced, so as to observe the changes that ensued. The repeated study has not yet been made. It was our intention to interview every head of household in each of the villages. We tried to interview as many families as reported by the 1951 census. But some discrepancies were due to the fact that a

¹Sri T. C. Das, Sri. N. K. Bose, Sri A. K. Mitra, Sri S. Sen and Sm. J. Sarma

few families had moved since the 1951 census investigation was made, or because they were temporarily absent from the village at the time of our fieldwork. Also sometimes we received resistance to the questions regarding land rights. This was especially due to the fact that a new bill concerning land tenancy was being passed by the West Bengal Legislature at the time of our field work. All efforts were made to overcome such resistance, and in none of the villages did our number of interviews of families fall below eighty percent of the figures recorded by the 1951 census.

For our investigations we used the schedules prepared by the Community Project Organization for taking counts of the members of families, occupations, and the data on land and agricultural enterprise. We made separate lists of questions regarding caste, migrations of members of households, frequency of contact outside of the village, and the attitudes of the villagers regarding social change, self-confidence, cooperativeness, and their conceptions of the effects of the new irrigation and flood control schemes.

We see then that the data on which this paper is based were collected with objectives different from the study of caste relations. However, since the repeated study has not yet been made, a comparison of before and the after effects of the DVC schemes is not possible. On the other hand, there are ample data for an objective study of the socio-economic conditions of village communities, and since the selected villages come from different parts of one district in West Bengal they may be said to be representatives of that district, if not of the whole State. Many studies have appeared lately on the integration of caste relations within the village social structure, and on inter-relations of castes. This paper, however, presents statistical data on the relations of caste ranks with secular status symbols such as occupations, income, education, and family types. Although many have presented their observations on the relations of caste with other social conditions, very few, if any statistical studies have been made. This paper is, therefore, original in presenting statistical data in order to test certain fundamental notions on caste societies.

The number and variety of castes vary in each of the villages under enquiry. In Bigra there are 12 castes and the Santals (a tribe). In Punyagram the castes are 10 in number besides the Santals and a large Muslim population. 40% of the families in this village are of the Muslim group. In Hijauna there are 15 castes with only one Santal family. In Mudafar-Falahari the castes are 14 in number and it has no Santal population. The actual numbers of families investigated in each of the villages are 188 in Bigra, 205 in Punyagram, 112 in Hijauna, and 158 in Mudafar-Falahari. Although Punyagram has more families, the caste population is about the same as in Bigra and Hijauna, because of its large number of Muslims.

The castes which prevail in all the four villages are the Bagdi, the Brahman, the Kayastha, and the Goala. The Bauri, Muchi, Napit, and the Santals are found in three of the four villages. Castes found in only one or two of the villages are not necessarily localized castes. The Namasudra and the Tanti, for example, although found only in Punyagram, are common in many parts of West Bengal. On the other hand, the Ugra-Kshatriya is a caste peculiar to the Burdwan district, but is found only in Bigra and Hijalna. The number of families of every caste in each of the villages is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

BIGRA		HIJALNA	
Caste	No. of families	Caste	No. of families
Bagdi	29	Bagdi	27
Bauri	1	Bagdi-Brahman	3
Bostom	2	Brahman	12
Brahman	9	Bauri	20
Chutor	1	Dom	1
Dom	1	Dom-Brahman	4
Ghatwal	1	Dule	6
Goala	24	Gandhabanik	3
Kayastha	9	Goala	4
Muchi	7	Hari	2
Tambuli	5	Kaibarta	3
Ugra-kshatriya	14	Kayestha	4
		Muchi	11
		Napit	1
		Sadgope	4
		Ugrakshatriya	6
Santal	14	Santal	1
Total	118	Total	112
MUDAFAR-FALAHARI		PUNYAGRAM	
Bagdi	40	Bagdi	18
Bagdi-Brahman	6	Bauri	47
Bostom	3	Brahman	5
Brahman	7	Ghatwal	1
Ganrwal	1	Goala	6
Goala	9	Kayastha	10
Hari	7	Muchi	3
Jugi	12	Namasudra	8
Kaloo	4	Napit	1
Karmakar	2	Tanti	12
Kayastha	9		
Moirā	1		
Napit	4		
Sadgope	53	Santal	11
		Muslim	83
Total	158	Total	205

In each village there is a general understanding of the relative rank of the castes resident within. This understanding is based on

the village traditions as well as the general mode of conduct of the members of the given castes. For example, in Bigra the Goala caste ranks very low. It is thought to be lower than the Bagdi caste, which is traditionally a low caste. The Goalas in the other villages have a fairly high status, as they have a clean occupation and are a moneyed people. In Bigra the Goalas inhabit an area at a distance of two miles from the village proper, and have little chance of social contacts with its residents of other castes. But traditionally the Goala neighbourhood is a part of Bigra proper, and the Goalas are under obligation to donate certain milk products during ceremonial functions in Bigra, such as during the *Kartik Puja*. Yet the Goala caste in this village has developed the stigma of having very low morals, and mainly for this reason it is looked down upon by members of other castes.

The common understanding in all the villages is the highest rank of the Brahmans, and the low rank occupied by certain well-known castes such as the Bagdi, Bauri, Dom, Muchi, Kaivarta, etc. The highest rank of the Brahmans is still due to the sacred supremacy denoted to this caste in the villages. Sometimes the sacred superiority is coordinated with certain high secular values, such as wealth and education. A caste which ranks high in secular status in most parts of Bengal is the Kayastha, and in two of the four villages we studied, this caste is ranked as high as the Brahman. In Bigra the position of the Kayasthas has fallen due to mishaps in the particular families, and they do not claim any social importance. In Hijalna, the members of the Kayastha caste are too few to make any impression on the village community, and the Brahmans here are very strong in maintaining their high social status. In between the high and the low castes lie all the other castes. These are clean castes mainly with craft types of caste occupations.

For the purpose of presenting our data in a simplified manner we have classified the castes into three broad groups of A, B, and C, or high, middle, and low ranks. It ought to be clearly understood that these are very broad groupings, and we do not assume an exact equality of status between all the castes in one group. For example, the Gandhabanik and the Jugi castes are thought to be not quite clean, and traditionally members of the high and the middle castes would not take water from them. However, these castes rank as high as the others of the B group in their secular status, and there is no reason to make a separate category for them only for their ritual impurity. It is a common notion among many that the Bagdi-Brahmans and the Dom-Brahmans are of the same rank as the castes for whom the latter are the priests. We found, however, that these Brahmans are much higher in their social values than the Bagdis and the Doms, and profess the same type of conduct as the high ranking

Brahmans in these villages. They also command much respect from other non-Brahman castes. However, the fact that the Brahmans do not consider them to be as high in social status as themselves, we have placed them in group B.

In the low status group, the Bagdis rank higher than the Bauri or the Muchi castes. The Ganrhwals in Mudafar-Falahari, although many of them own land, are thought to be lower than the Bagdis by the villagers. The Ganrhwals are said to be of a section of the Kolu or oil-pressers, and to our enquiry most of them have returned themselves as Kolu with the hope of losing the low status associated with the Ganrhwals. The Namasudras in Punyagram rank high in sicoal esteem in being clean and respectable people, and in this village they are ranked higher than the Bagdis. In placing such people together in one group, therefore, we are overlooking many social discrepancies. These large groupings are feasible for research purposes, however, since we want to study other social economic conditions in their relations to the broad differences in caste rank, rather than the inter-relation of the castes among themselves. The division of the castes according to three broad rank groups is presented below.

"A" or High

1. Brahman
2. Kayastha (for Punyagram and Madafar-Falahari only)

"B" or Middle

1. Bagdi-Brahman
2. Bostom
3. Chutor
4. Dom-Brahman
5. Gandhabanik
6. Goala
7. Jugi
8. Karmakar
9. Kayastha (for Bigra and Hijalna only)
10. Moira
11. Napit
12. Sadgope
13. Tambuli
14. Tanti
15. Ugra-Kshatriya

"C" or Low

1. Bagdi
2. Bauri
3. Dom
4. Dule
5. Ganrhwai
6. Ghatwal
7. Goala (for Bigra only)
8. Hari
9. Kaivarta
10. Kalu
11. Muchi
12. Namasudra

"S" for Santals

"M" for Mulsims

A numerical distribution of the families of these five groups in the four villages is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES OF THE FOUR VILLAGES ACCORDING TO STATUS GROUPS

Status Group	BIGRA		HIJALNA		MUDAFAR-FALAHARI		PUNYAGRAM		TOTAL	
	Fre- quency	Percent- age	Fre- quency	Percent- age	Fre- quency	Percent- age	Fre- quency	Percent- age	Fre- quency	Percent- age
A	9	7.6	12	10.7	16	10.1	15	7.3	52	8.8
B	31	26.3	29	25.9	90	57.0	19	9.3	169	28.5
C	64	54.2	70	62.5	52	32.9	77	37.6	263	44.3
S	14	11.9	1	0.9	—	—	11	5.4	26	4.4
M	—	—	—	—	—	—	83	40.4	83	14.0
Total	118	100.00	112	100.00	158	100.00	205	100.00	593	100.00

The notable feature in the caste composition of the population in these villages is the comparative absence of castes with high social status such as Brahmans and Kayasthas. The villages of Bigra and Hijalna have got the maximum number of families of low social status. The village of Mudafar-Falahari, on the other hand, is mainly inhabited by castes like Moira, Karmakar, Tanti, Sadgope, etc., who have been ascribed a middle rank.

We shall first examine the primary occupations practised by the members of the various castes in the four villages. Caste has long acquired notice as being the crystallization of an occupational group, and many of the early students of the caste system sought to explain the origins of caste in the hereditary practice of given occupations. We find that 74% of the families of the four villages have agricultural occupations as their primary means of livelihood, and if we divide the followers of the agricultural occupations into four categories of non-cultivating owner, owner-cultivator, share-cropper, and agricultural labourer, there is a tendency for members of each status group to be associated with each of these occupations. The frequencies and percentages of the agricultural occupations, according to the large status groups, are presented in Table 3.

The members of the A group of castes are mostly non-cultivating owners, and a large number of them follow non-agricultural pursuits. In none of the villages are they found in the position of share-croppers or agricultural labourers. In the B group of castes there are more

TABLE 3
STATUS GROUPS AND PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS IN EACH VILLAGE

Status Groups	Non-cultivating owner	Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Others	Total
1. BIGRA						
A	4 44.44 (25.00)	1 11.11 (4.00)	—	—	4 44.44	9
B	11 35.48 (68.75)	6 19.35 (24.00)	1 3.23 (3.85)	1 3.23 (3.70)	12 38.71	31
C	1 1.56 (6.25)	16 25.00 (64.00)	15 23.44 (57.69)	24 37.50 (88.89)	8 12.50	64
S	—	2 14.29 (8.00)	10 71.43 (38.46)	2 14.29 (7.41)	—	14
Total						118
2. HIJALNA						
A	7 58.33 (50.00)	—	—	—	5 41.67	12
B	7 24.14 (50.00)	11 37.93 (57.89)	2 6.90 (7.41)	—	9 31.03	29
C	0	8 11.43 (42.11)	24 34.28 (88.89)	24 34.28 (100.00)	14 20.00	70
S	—	—	1 100.00 (3.70)	—	—	1
Total						112
3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI						
A	5 31.25 (45.45)	2 12.50 (6.25)	—	—	9 56.25	16
B	3 3.33 (27.27)	27 30.00 (84.38)	22 24.44 (70.97)	4 4.44 (16.00)	34 37.78	90
C	3 5.77 (27.27)	3 5.77 (9.37)	9 17.31 (29.03)	21 40.38 (84.00)	16 30.77	52
Total						158

Status Groups	Non-cultivating owner	Owner cultivator	Share-cropper	Agricultural labourer	Others	Total
4. PUNYAGRAM						
A	3 20.00 (25.00)	3 20.00 (8.57)	0	0	9 60.00	15
B	1 5.26 (8.33)	6 31.58 (17.15)	0	0	12 63.16	19
C	0	3 3.89 (8.57)	33 42.86 (51.56)	33 42.86 (66.00)	8 10.39	77
S	0	0	8 72.73 (12.50)	3 27.27 (6.00)	0	11
M	8 9.64	23 27.71	23 27.71	14 16.87	15 18.07	83
Total	(66.66)	(65.71)	(35.94)	(28.00)		205

Note : The percentages without brackets are percentages of the status group totals.
The percentages within brackets are percentages of the occupational group totals.

owner-cultivators than non-agricultural owners, except in Bigra where the reverse is the case. Many members of this group also follow non-agricultural occupations. The majority of the village craftsmen belong to this group. In Mudafar-Falahari where the members of the B group are numerically greater than the members of the C group of castes, the majority of the share-croppers come from the B group, and 16% of the agricultural labourers. In Hijalna, on the other hand, only one share-cropper of B status group is found, one share-cropper and one agricultural labourer in Bigra, and none in Punyagram.

In the C caste group only four persons are non-cultivating owners, three in Mudafar-Falahari, and one in Bigra. In Hijalna 42.11% of the owner-cultivators come from this low status group, and 64% in Bigra, whereas in the other two villages, they constitute very small percentages of the owner cultivators. Share-cropping and daily labour are the main occupations of the C group, as very large per cent of its members follow these pursuits in all the four villages. It should also be noted here that the number of persons of the C group following non-agricultural occupations is comparatively small.

The non-agricultural occupations are many and various and it is difficult to present them in neat categories. However, attempts

have been made to do so, and a table containing the frequencies and percentages of the status groups in eight types of occupations are presented below, consolidating the figures for all the four villages. (Table 4)

TABLE 4
NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS FOLLOWED BY THE STATUS GROUPS IN
THE FOUR VILLAGES

Status groups	Caste occup.	Crafts	Service	Trade & Business	Medical Practice	Paddy husking	Charity	Others	Total
A	2 7.14	5 17.86	9 32.14	5 17.86	3 10.71	0	2 7.14	2 7.14	28
B	28 45.90	7 11.48	10 16.39	2 3.28	1 1.64	9 14.75	3 4.92	1 1.64	61
C	5 10.00	0	9 18.00	4 8.00	0	20 40.00	6 12.00	6 12.00	50
M	0	4 26.67	2 13.33	3 20.00	0	3 20.00	3 20.00	0	15

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

In Table 4 it is to be noted primarily that followers of caste occupations for primary means of livelihood are very few, and of the 593 families in the four villages they consist of only 5.90% of the heads of households. It is significant that the adherents of caste occupations are mostly of the B status group and of the 61 families of this group 45.90% follow caste occupations. In classifying the occupations in Table 4, sometimes the caste occupations also fit the other occupational headings, and in such circumstances they have been preferably listed as caste occupations. Thus one Tambuli and one Gandhabanik who are grocers have been listed as followers of caste occupations rather than of trade and business. In Table 5 a numerical distribution of the caste occupations is presented.

It is obvious that caste occupations are practised only when they are remunerative as primary occupations. Thus weaving is a remunerative craft and adhered to by all the Tantis in Punyagram. Not only is it followed by the members of this caste, but also by 2 Brahmans, 2 Kayasthas, and 2 Muslims who find it a profitable occupation. We observed that most of the Goalas follow the caste occupation of tending cows, but none of them returned this as their primary occupation. As a result, all of them have been counted as agriculturists.

Among crafts which are not caste occupations have been included *biri*-making by 6 families, mat-making by 1 family, masonry by 1

family, weaving by 4 families, mechanic by 1 family. None of the C group of castes practise craft occupations. In the Service column fall the literate services of the upper castes, whereas among the lower castes they denote the services of servants and chowkidars. The column of Trade and Business overlaps with many of the caste occupations. The weavers, blacksmiths, the confectioner, as well as the three grocers, could all fall into this group. We may say that it lists those in trade or business who do not practise it as caste occupation. Among medical practitioners have been included homeopaths and compounders as well as licensed physicians as the former are also village doctors. Paddy-husking is done by women folk only, and mostly by the women of the C status group. None of the upper caste women are found to do this work. Charity includes charity from kin group or friends as well as begging. In the "Other" category fall many odd jobs which could not be classified in the above categories.

TABLE 5
FOLLOWERS OF CASTE OCCUPATIONS IN THE FOUR VILLAGES

Occupations	Castes	Heads of households
Priests	Brahman	2
	Bagdi-Brahman	5
	Dom-Brahman	3
	Jugi	1
Weaving	Tanti	12
Fishing	Kaivarta	2
	Bagdi (Duley)	1
Carpentry	Chutor	1
Cobbler	Muchi	1
Confectionery	Moirā	1
Ironwork	Kamar	2
Grocer	Gandhabanik	1
	Tambuli	2
Boatman	Bagdi (Majhi)	1

We shall now consider the income level of each of the status groups. The agricultural income was estimated from the values of the produced commodities and their by-products. In order to fix the prices of different crops, help was taken of the District Price

Bulletin for the years 1951 and 1952. The average prices of the commodities for different months from December 1951 to November 1952 were calculated. The medium value of the average prices of different months was taken as the average for the year. The following prices were calculated for different commodities :

Paddy	Rs. 11/10/0	per	Maund
Gur	14/ 4/0	"	"
Potato	13/ 5/0	"	"
Pulses	17/ 7/0	"	"
Hay	1/15/0	"	"
Milk	25/ 0/0	"	"
Onion	9/ 0/0	"	"
Jute	27/0 /0	"	"
Oil-cake	8/ 3/0	"	"
Mustard seeds	24/ 4/0	"	"
Other vegetables	6/ 0/0	"	"
Sugarcane	1/12/0	"	"
Wheat	18/ 8/0	"	"
Salt manure	17/ 0/0	"	"
Sun Hemp	30/ 0/0	"	"
Eggs	11/ 3/0	per	100

For calculating the non-agricultural income, the wage rates used for the different types of labourers are

Day labourer	Re. 1/-	per day
Roof repairer	1/-	per day
Paddy dehusker	one seer	of rice per day

Persons in other occupations were asked of their monetary income. The average number of earning members per family in the four villages comes to 1.42. There is usually more than one earning member in the joint families, and among the lower castes both the husband and the wife work in many of the families.

In studying the income distribution of the status groups, we observe that all the people in these villages are very poor, and the annual income of the great majority of the villagers falls far below Rs. 280/- per capita, the average annual income for all India. Very few of the families fall into a moderately high income group, and it was not found to be expedient to make categories higher than Rs. 250/- and over per annum. The following income classes have been made: Rs. 0-149, Rs. 150-249, and Rs. 250/- and over. The data for the individual villages do not seem to show any significant relations between the income levels and social status of the caste groups. In

Bigra, for instance, 55.56% of group A, 48.38% of group B, and 56.25% of group C fall in the Rs. 0-149 income level. In Hijalna 70% of A group, 53.57% of B group, and 81.16% of C group fall into the same income level. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentages of the A and B status groups in the very low income level are about the same in being 43.75, and 43.33 respectively, whereas the percentage of group C is 76.92. Only in Punyagram is there a gradation in the percentages, being 33.33, 47.37, and 67.54 for the A, B, and C groups respectively.

In the income level of Rs. 250/- and over in Bigra the A group is 11.11 percent, C group 12.50%, as against 32.27% of the B group. In Hijalna and Punyagram, however, there are gradations in the percentages of this income level, in Hijalna there being 30.00%, 10.71% and 4.35% respectively of the A, B, and C groups, and in Punyagram 33.33 of the A group, 26.32 of the B group, and 9.09% of the C group.

TABLE 6

STATUS GROUPS AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOUR VILLAGES

Status groups	Rs. 0-149	Rs. 150-249	Rs. 250 & over	Total
A	24 48.00	15 30.00	11 22.00	50
B	78 46.43	57 33.93	33 19.64	168
C	184 70.24	58 22.13	20 7.63	262
S	15 57.69	8 30.77	3 11.54	26
M	29 35.80	32 39.51	20 24.69	81

Although in the individual villages we do not necessarily find any order in the income levels according to the status groups, cumulated data of the four villages in Table 6 show that the income level of the two higher status groups are about similar, whereas the members of the C group are poorer in having a larger percentage in the Rs. 0-149 level, and smaller percentages in the other two levels. The difference, however, is not great, there being 48.00% of the A group, 46.43% of the B group, and 70.24% of the C group in the Rs. 0-149 income level. In reverse, in the Rs. 250/- and over income level, the percentages are 22.00 of A group, 19.64 of B group, and 7.63 of C group. Such differences are not as great as the contrasting ranks of the higher

and lower caste groups, or the social distance between the land owners and the labourers in the village community. A Brahman may be very poor, but he has status higher than any of the richer men of lower castes. Social status is maintained in his choice of occupations. That he may have an income somewhat higher than the persons in the lowest social status is due more to the distribution of inherited wealth than to his ambition to be richer. Or if he becomes employed in a non-agricultural occupation he may command a higher income because of his privilege of education which is again associated with his high social status. High income without the support of other status symbols does not give a man a high social position in the village community.

In contrast, when we consider literacy in relation to social status we find that the acquirement of certain amount of formal education is an aspect of upper caste behaviour. There is a higher percentage of literate members in the families of the A status group than in those of the other groups. A literate person is defined to be anyone who can read and write. For the class of literates, all persons with school education below the matriculation level have been grouped together with literate person without school education. Occasional persons with college education were found, and these have been grouped with the few who had passed the matriculation examination.

One lower primary school exists in each of the villages. Usually the formal education of girls is restricted to the lower primary level. Upper primary schools exist in the bigger villages, and boys desirous of continuing their education either stay near these schools, or walk a considerable distance every day from their homes. For the completion of their high school education the boys go to the schools in the nearby town, and for their college education they go either to Burdwan or to Calcutta.

In the original tables, entry was made for all persons in each family, the children below school age falling thereby into the illiterate group. As the original documents are not with the writer it has not been possible to make a recount, and separate the number of pre-school age children for each of the caste groups. However, since the age groups of each village are available, proportionate subtractions of children in the ages 0-4 have been made from the number of illiterates in each status group to derive the present figures. In Bigra the percentage of children from 0-4 is 8.5%, in Hijalna 19.33%, in Punyagram 20.00%, and in Mudafar-Falahari 20.9% of the illiterate population.

The percentage of illiterate persons in Bigra is found to be 34.8% for the A group, 53.3% for the B group, and 94.2% for the C group. In Hijalna illiteracy among the A group is greater in being 46.9%, 52.00% for the B group, and 89.7% for the C group. Similarly in

TABLE 7
STATUS GROUPS AND LITERACY IN EACH VILLAGE

Status groups	Illiterate	Literate	Matric & above	Total
1. BIGRA				
A	23 (34.8)	39 (59.1)	4 (6.1)	66
B	88 (53.3)	73 (44.2)	4 (2.5)	165
C	264 (94.2)	16 (5.8)	0	280
S	66 (98.5)	1 (1.5)	0	67
2. HIJALNA				
A	23 (46.9)	24 (49.0)	2 (4.1)	49
B	79 (52.0)	69 (45.4)	4 (2.6)	152
C	210 (89.7)	24 (10.3)	0	234
S	5 (100.00)	0	0	5
3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI				
A	28 (31.8)	57 (64.8)	3 (3.4)	88
B	243 (59.5)	163 (40.0)	2 (0.5)	408
C	142 (79.8)	36 (20.2)	0	178
4. PUNYAGRAM				
A	34 (45.4)	31 (41.3)	10 (13.3)	75
B	54 (55.7)	42 (43.3)	1 (1.0)	97
C	260 (91.9)	23 (8.1)	0	283
S	25 (100.0)	0	0	25
M	221 (64.1)	121 (35.1)	3 (0.8)	345

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

Punyagram the percentages of illiteracy are 45.4%, 55.7%, and 91.9% for the A, B, and C groups respectively. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentage of illiteracy is lower than in the other villages among the A and the C status groups, being 31.8% for the A group, 59.5% for the B group, and 79.8% for the C group. The percentage of illiteracy is surely greater among the women of each group. However, even counting the males and the females together we see an inverse relationship between higher caste status and lower percentage of illiteracy. The Santals are 100% illiterate. Among the Muslims in Punyagram the percentage of illiteracy is 64.1.

The relationship between high caste status and formal education is again brought out when we consider the proportion of children of school-going age of the different status groups who attend schools. The school-going age is considered to be 5 to 14 years. Only the families with children have been counted.

In each village the percentage of families who do not send any children to school is highest in the C group, and lowest in the A group. The reverse may be said of the families which send all their children to school, the highest percentage being among the A group and the lowest among the C group except in Hijalna where the families of the B group have the highest percentage in sending all their children to school. We need to consider that among the higher castes the very young children are made to study at home rather than in school and that in some families the children are not sent to school before they are seven or eight years of age. However, the facts we have on hand are enough to show that the acquiring of formal education is an aspect of upper-caste behaviour. Although the A and the B groups are similar in their income levels, there is much difference in the literacy rates of the two status groups, and the two groups together stand much higher than the C group in literacy, thereby giving support to the social distance which is found to prevail between them by common observation.

With the consideration of family types and their relation to the status groups we shall come to the end of this paper. The family types in rural areas offer subjects of much interest to the research students. In general sentiments the joint family system is still the preferred type of family organization. There is a common belief that it is due to the exigencies of urban society that the joint family system is undergoing disruption, and that affectionate sentiments for parents and brothers are steadily decreasing. It is also believed that joint families denote higher status and are more prevalent among the upper castes. An examination of the family types and their prevalence among the several status groups throw some light on these ideas.

We have differentiated between four types of families. The

TABLE 8

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE IN EACH STATUS GROUP

Status group	0	$\frac{1}{5}$	$\frac{2}{5}$	$\frac{3}{5}$	$\frac{4}{5}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	Total
1. BIGRA										
A	1 11.11					1	1		6 66.67	9
B	10 43.43	2				1	2		8 34.78	23
C	29 78.38		1	2			1		4 10.81	37
S	9 100.00									9
2. HIJALNA										
A	1 11.11		1		1				6 66.67	9
B	2 11.76					2			13 76.47	17
C	22 59.46			1	1	3			10 27.03	37
D	1 100.00									1
3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI										
A	0							1	10 90.91	11
B	2 4.08	2	1	2	1	8	4		29 59.89	49
C	20 66.67				1	2			7 23.33	30
4. PUNYAGRAM										
A	2 25.00					3			3 37.5	8
B	4 36.36				1	2			4 36.36	11
C	32 84.21	1	1	1					3 7.89	38
S	2 100.00									2
M	22 51.16	1		1			4		15 34.95	43

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

TABLE 9

STATUS GROUPS AND FAMILY TYPES IN EACH VILLAGE

Status groups	Nuclear	Joint with brothers	Joint with parents	Joint with others	Total
1. BIGRA					
A	4 44.44	1 11.11	3 33.33	1 11.11	9
B	18 58.07	6 19.35	6 19.35	1 3.22	31
C	41 64.06	6 9.37	14 21.88	3 4.69	64
S	12 85.71	1 7.14	1 7.14	—	14
2. HIJALNA					
A	8 66.66	2 16.67	2 16.67	—	12
B	13 44.83	3 10.34	12 41.38	1 3.45	29
C	41 58.58	5 7.14	20 28.57	4 5.71	70
S	—	1 100.00	—	—	1
3. MUDAFAR-FALAHARI					
A	7 48.75	5 31.25	4 25.00	0	16
B	41 45.56	14 15.56	25 27.77	10 11.11	90
C	37 71.15	2 3.85	13 25.00	0	52
4. PUNYAGRAM					
A	8 53.33	3 20.00	3 20.00	1 6.67	15
B	10 52.63	3 15.79	4 21.05	2 10.53	19
C	40 51.95	7 9.09	22 28.57	8 10.39	77
S	8 72.73	0	1 9.09	2 18.18	11
M	45 54.22	6 7.23	28 33.73	4 4.82	83

Note : The percentages are of the status group totals.

nuclear family consists only of parents and children. Minor brothers or sisters living with a married brother have been included in the nuclear family. "Joint families with parents" indicate families with one married son or more living with one or both the parents. "Joint families with brothers" indicate families consisting of several brothers with their respective wives and children. "Joint families with others" denote families with other kin members who are not usually found in the patrilineal types of joint families. All persons living in the same household have been considered to be of the same family. In a disrupted joint family still living in the same house, one family unit or a household is differentiated from another by its possession of a separate kitchen.

The average family size is 5.22 in Bigra, 4.75 in Punyagram, 4.51 in Hijalna, and 4.98 in Mudafar-Falahari. The percentage of nuclear families is 51.92% for the A, and 49.11% for the B group, and 60.05% for the C group in the four villages, and 76.92% for the Santals in two villages. In Hijalna, however, the A group has the highest percentage of nuclear families, and the B group the lowest percentage. It is to be noted that the C group has the lowest percentage of "joint families with brothers", the highest percentage being among the A group in all the villages. However, these figures are very low in themselves. In Mudafar-Falahari the percentage of families with brothers among the A group is 31.25, in Punyagram 20.00, in Hijalna 16.67, and in Bigra 11.11. "Joint families with parents" vary between 17.00% and 33.00% among all the caste groups, except in Hijalna where among the B group this type of family is found to be 41.38%. Thus although the higher status groups do have higher percentages of joint families than the C status group, the difference is very small, and 50.00% of families of higher status are of the nuclear type.

TABLE 10
FAMILY TYPES AND OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN FOUR VILLAGES

Family Types	Owner-cultivator	Share-cropper	Non-cultivating owner	Agricultural labour	Others	Total
Nuclear	39 35.14	63 42.57	32 58.49	95 75.40	104 67.74	333
Joint with Brothers	17 15.31	19 12.84	5 9.43	4 3.17	13 8.39	58
Joint with Parents	43 38.74	53 35.81	16 30.19	22 17.46	32 20.75	166
Joint with others	12 10.81	13 8.78	1 1.89	5 3.97	5 3.22	36
Total	111	148	53	126	155	593

Note : The percentages are of the occupational group totals.

If we classify the family types according to the agricultural occupational groups, we find a definite order of relationship between occupations and family structure. In Table 10 we see that the owner-cultivator class has the lowest percentage of nuclear families—35.14%, and the highest percentage of joint families, with brothers—15.31%, with parents—38.74%, and with others—10.81%. Next come the share-croppers with a higher percentage of nuclear families and lower percentages of joint families of all types. Next in order are the non-cultivating owners with 59.26% of nuclear families, and with percentages of joint families of all types lower than those of the share-croppers. Last of all are the day labourers with 75.40% of nuclear families, and the lowest percentages of joint families with brothers, 3.17, and with parents, 17.46.

It is apparent, therefore, that the family types are very much influenced by occupational status. It seems that the non-cultivating owners are more desirous of having nuclear families than the owner-cultivators and the share-croppers. Perhaps, the latter groups find it convenient to have the family members stay together for the common purpose of working together on land, whereas the non-cultivating owners are more interested in dividing the family property and establishing separate families. Since the non-cultivating owners mostly consist of the A and the B group of castes, it would seem that they would have the highest percentage of joint families with brothers, but the opposite is the case.

We may say that caste status is sacred in being hereditary and in having support of the sacred ideologies of the Hindu society. Every caste has a sacred myth of origin which is made to justify its position, whether high or low. A man of low caste is proud of his caste status, and he may claim a little higher position for his caste than is ascribed by the village society, but he never denies his caste, especially within the village. Many of the castes have hereditary occupations, but a change of occupation does not necessarily bring with it a change of caste status. In the four villages we have studied a very small percentage of the families is found to be engaged in its caste occupation. Caste occupation is usually supported by the myth of origin of the caste, and since the feeling of ritual cleanliness or uncleanness is attached to it, it may be said to reflect on the sacred status of the caste. A change of occupation does not change caste status immediately, but it may bring such a change after several generations, particularly if it is associated with other changes in the ritual and secular patterns of living.

A caste, therefore, has two types of status, sacred and secular. One is based on traditions and regulates the ceremonial relationships between castes, and the other is the status acquired under modern conditions of living, and is mainly dependent on present occupation,

source of income, and education. Ranking of the caste groups, in this paper, into three status groups is based on the common understanding of the villagers, and although both the sacred and the secular positions are taken into account, in cases of great discrepancies preference is given to the secular positions. The common observations seem to be tenable since our analyses of the occupational distribution, income, education, and family types affirm the differences between the groups. In some aspects the differences are great as in regard to occupation and education, and small in regard to income and family types.

In cities the importance of secular values in the evaluation of a person's status is greater, and one may even deny or change his caste status, taking advantage of the anonymity of urban life. But even in villages we see that secular status is extremely significant, and how the sacred and the secular positions of caste are combined in the regulation of individual conduct, and in the behaviour between persons of different castes should be further studied. Since the data for this paper were gathered for purposes different from the study of social status, it is not possible to go further into this problem at present.

THE CUSTOM OF POLYANDRY AS PRACTISED IN TRAVANCORE

C. M. ABRAHAM

Travancore, once a princely state and now a part of the newly-formed Kerala State, of the Republic of India, is situated at the southern extremity of the Indian Peninsula. Kerala is the generic name for three Malayalam speaking areas, viz., Malabar (previously a part of the Madras State), Cochin, and Travancore (formerly two princely states, integrated after Independence, on 1st July 1949, into the Union of Travancore-Cochin States). This coastal area extending from Kasarcode to Cape Comorin—the Cape being described as the feet of 'Kerala Mata' washed by the waves of three seas—is often referred to by Westerners under the general name of Malabar. This region is one of the most picturesque parts of India, rich in scenic beauty. The coastal area is practically cut off from the rest of India by Western Ghats, rising in places to a height of 8000 ft. on the east, Arabian Sea on the west, and Indian Ocean on the south. This position of isolation of the whole of Kerala from the rest of India invests its people and their institutions with certain marked peculiarities and distinct characteristics. Kerala is unique in many respects. It differs widely from the rest of India. Its geography, its land systems, its crops and its rural setting, are all peculiar. It has given rise to its indigenous art, literature, music, painting, dancing, sculpture and architecture. Kerala's unique dance drama—*Katha Kali*—is well known. Kerala is famous for its export of cardamom, pepper, cashewnuts, ginger, rubber, coffee, cinnamon and other dollar-earning commodities. Again this country is noted for its export of precious human commodity of Menons, Panikkars, Nairs and Syrian Christians. A popular saying mentions that a Malayali is likely to be discovered even in the Himalayas.

Again in its peoples, their customs and ways of life, this part of the Indian Peninsula is very conspicuous. Anthropologists, sociologists and foreign travellers evinced great interest in the peculiar customs of the people, especially of the Nairs. Caste system at the height of its influence, was a social institution of great complexity,¹ and it was perhaps more highly developed and socially rigid in Kerala than anywhere else in India². Kerala was called the home of rigid conservatism in customs, beliefs and practices.³

(This paper is the outcome of field investigations carried out by the author during the 1957 summer, at Chadayamangalam in the Kottarakara Taluk, at Koodal in the Pathanapuram Taluk and at Edappon in the Mavelikara Taluk, Quilon District of Kerala).

At the apex of the traditional caste hierarchy were the Namboodiris (Malayalee Brahmins). They claim to be the purest of the Vedic stock and faith, sacerdotal, rich,⁴ and formed the 'socio-spiritual aristocracy'⁵ of the land. The isolation of the country made them extremely narrow-minded, and caste system rendered them most hide-bound. Hence the Malayalam proverb: 'Malabar is a heaven for the Brahmins and a hell for the rest'. One significant peculiarity of this area is the almost complete absence of the Vaisyas and the very doubtful occurrence of the Kshatriyas. The only Kshatriyas were the members of the ruling families, and their assumption to the title was said to have been based on their wealth and status, which raised them above their previous status of Nairs. It is to be recognised that though the Maharaja of Travancore claims to be a Kshatriya, the succession follows the local Nair custom of inheritance in the female line. Hence it is not improbable that these 'Kshatriyas' have descended from the Nairs.

Next in rank and prestige come the Nairs—"the pure Sudras of the Malayala"⁶. J. C. Locke, in his *The First Englishmen in India* describes the Nairs as the polyandrous warrior race of Malabar. They correspond to the Kshatriyas of the rest of India.⁷ In former times, they alone had the right to carry arms and every Nair youth had to join a local military and gymnastic school, known as *Kalari* where he was instructed in the use of sword, bow and lance. After such a training was he enrolled in the militia of the local chief.⁸ In that era, every village temple had its own assembly, presided over by the *Desavazhis*—chief of the locality—and consisting of the important residents of the village and of responsible temple officials and the headman (*Naduvazhi*) of the village—the administrative unit of those days. *Naduvazhis* had a status and entitled to maintain a militia of Nairs at least a hundred strong, and represented the ruling chief as a *koyma* in the Village Council⁹. The whole community of the Nairs formed the militia of the Malayala, directed by the Namboodiris and governed by the Rajas.¹⁰ Varthema and Barbosa mention that the Nairs were obliged to bear a sword and shield or bow and lance when going through a street. The unique customs and laws of the Nairs are the outcome of the undue advantage taken by the Namboodiri Brahmins over the Nairs.¹¹

A Nair may approach, but not touch a Malayali Brahmin. Among the Namboodiri Brahmins, only the eldest son was allowed to marry (*veli*) in his own caste. The younger sons were allowed *sammandham* or connections with Nair women. The children born of such unions were considered as Nairs and they could not be taken to the Namboodiri houses—'illams' or 'manas'. So a Nair woman and her children from a Namboodiri Brahmin spouse, remain in her mother's *tarawad* (family) and the Brahmin spouse visits her at nights only. In the past

he was not permitted to accept anything, not even water, from a Nair *tarawad*.

Next to the Nairs come the Izhavas (*Chokans*) and other unclean castes, who are traditionally said to pollute Namboodiri Brahmins by their approach. On the lowest rung of society, come the primitive tribes living in the forests. The degree of pollution was calculated in terms of the distance they had to maintain from the high caste Brahmin. In each caste, the caste law operated relentlessly and thus caste segregation was maintained rigidly. The Christians and the Muslims exist outside the framework of the caste hierarchy.

One of the earliest and important of the foreign travellers who visited India before the coming of the Portuguese was Nicolo de' Conti, a nobleman of the Venetian house. In 1419 when he visited 'Coloen' (Quilon) in Travancore, 'Cocym' (Cochin) and Calicut, on his return from Java and Sumbawa to Combay by sea, he noticed, like almost all subsequent visitors to that place, the flagrant polyandry of certain classes of people, the conventions relating thereto, and the extraordinary laws of inheritance which were necessitated by 'unusual' marriage customs.¹² The marriage customs and the system of polyandry of the Nairs have attracted much attention of the travellers dating from the 14th century to the present day. Especially during the 70 to 80 years that succeeded the first voyage to India of Vasco-de-Gama, a number of travellers visited India and left accounts of varying value. Among the travellers, the reports of Varthema, Barbosa and Federici, are very valuable. As regards social customs two things seem to have struck all observers. The first was the tyranny of the high caste Brahmins, and the second the polyandry of the Nair women.¹³ From other subsequent travellers, for instance, Alexander Hamilton, John Henry Grose, T. K. Sonnerat, Jonathan Duncan, F. Buchanan and James Forbes, we learn that the Nair women used to have as many lovers as they chose. They must be of an equal or higher rank than her own. They were proud of reckoning among their favoured lovers many Brahmins, Rajas, or other persons of high birth.¹⁴ In consequence of this strange system, we are told by F. Buchanan that 'no Nair knows his father'.¹⁵ Varthema, Federici and Barbosa, all mention the system and the extraordinary laws of inheritance resulting from it. In almost all the accounts of the foreign travellers, reference is made to the non-fraternal type of polyandry, and it is inferred that the selection of lovers belonging to a higher rank or of equal rank by the Nair women, and the military duties of the Nairs are mainly responsible for the non-fraternal type of polyandry. We have already mentioned the fact that a Nair woman can select as many lovers from among the Brahmins, Rajas, or other persons of high rank, as she desires. The woman remains in her mother's *tarawad* and the children born of these marriages belong to

the woman who bore them. Their marriages do not establish anything in common between husband and wife, except the bed, for each dwells during the day with his or her parents. The men visit their mistresses by turn and they are reckoned as strangers by the children. Thus the concubinage system is to a very large measure responsible for the non-fraternal type of polyandry.

Another reason for the non-fraternal polyandry may be connected with the military profession of the Nairs. The Malabar princes had large numbers of well-trained Nair warriors in their services. The strength of a prince depended mainly upon his Nair force. The Nair forces were directly under their *Naduvazhis*, whose services were requisitioned by the princes. The *Naduvazhi* was the military chief and it was his duty to be present at the battle field with his fighting men whenever requisitioned by the princes.¹⁶ The Nairs served the King in war and peace and were maintained by him.¹⁷ Foreign travellers in Malabar in the 14th century A.D. noted that the country was divided among 12 kings. They also mention of the large number of local chieftains and nobles in Malabar, who enjoyed a semi-sovereign authority. These different chieftains and princes and nobles were frequently at war with each other. The custom of polyandry was believed to have originated when every Nair was bound to give his personal attendance at the chief's palace and at the residence of the chiefs in the hierarchy, during stated periods. During the long intervals of absence enforced on a Nair by his duty, it was necessary that some one may be with the Nair women. For this purpose, the Nair women selected men of higher rank as lovers, or other Nairs who were free, to visit them. Thus at that time the Nair women enjoyed the privilege of possessing several husbands. Abbe J. A. Dubois, in his *Hindu Manners and Customs* remarks that although the Nair women are commonly described as polyandrous, they are not really so, for though they enjoy the privilege of possessing several husbands, they do not entertain more than one husband at a time.¹⁸

There is some controversy on this point, whether non-fraternal polyandry actually existed or not in Malabar. A host of foreign travellers and a number of anthropologists, notable among them W. H. R. Rivers and J. F. McLennan, refer to Nair polyandry as of the non-fraternal type. But Sardar K. M. Panikkar, a native of Travancore, denies the prevalence of the non-fraternal form of polyandry among the Nairs.¹⁹ He writes, "It is a point very keenly debated as to how far polyandry was prevalent among the Nairs in olden times. During the last fifty years no trace of such a system has been found. It is to a certain extent true that there is extreme instability of marriage relationship among the commoner folk even now. But to a woman to have more than one husband at a time seems to have been against the moral ideas of the community even two hundred

years ago. Nayar ballads and poetry of that age contain many passages where polyandry is spoken of as a barbarous and unknown custom."²⁰ The complicated custom of the association of the Namboodiri Brahmins with Nair women led the foreign travellers to mistake it as the non-fraternal type of polyandry. The Italian traveller Gemelli Careri expressly states that the husbands in Nair marriage were brothers; "when one brother marries a woman" he states "she is common to all others".²¹ Other travellers, misled by the part played by Brahmins in such unions, and also by the fact that in the Nair social system there were no 'actual' but only 'tribal' brothers, that is members of the same *tarawad*, have described Nair polyandry as non-fraternal.²²

In some of the recent publications, for instance, *Land and Society in Malabar* by Adrian C. Mayer, no mention has been made of polyandry among the Nairs. In *Social Change in Malabar* by M. S. A. Rao, mention has been made that this system is almost extinct. Recent investigations in Travancore, however, bring to light the fact that polyandry, *i.e.*, fraternal polyandry, is still practised by a large number of social groups in Central Travancore. It is practised by the Nairs, Izhavas (*Chokans*), Kaniyans, Kollans (Blacksmiths), Velans, and Asaris (Carpenters). In the eastern parts of the Quilon District, a large number of people practise polyandry. In other districts the distribution of polyandrous families is very much scattered. My enquiry in the different districts of Travancore brings out the fact that the non-fraternal type is completely extinct. So at the present day, wherever polyandry survives, it is of the fraternal type. Zerrir-reddin suggested that the lower castes such as Carpenters (Asaris), Izhavas (*Chokans*), Kollan (Blacksmith), Velan and Kaniyans have fallen in imitating their superiors—the Nairs—in the practise of polyandry.²³

At the present day, polyandry is on the wane and in some areas, it has completely disappeared. Where it exists the 'associate' husbands of a woman, are almost invariably full brothers. In the majority of cases two brothers have a wife in common. In some cases before marriage, it is made known to the woman and her relatives that she will be the common wife of two or more brothers. But in most cases after the marriage, the husband and wife agree to admit a brother or brothers in their union. This arrangement may not be necessarily permanent. The younger brother is free to contract a separate marriage and establish a family of his own. The elder brother and his wife can admit any younger brother they may like in the union. When a younger brother is admitted, there is no rule that it should be informed and recorded in the *Karayogam* register. Though their *Karayogam* does not give any formal approval to this union, it does not disapprove of this polyandrous system. Among the

Nairs, Kaniyans and Velans, there is no formal ceremony or ritual, intimating others that two or three brothers share a common wife. There will be a mutual understanding among the brothers and the common wife. But among the Asaris (Carpenters) and Kollans (Blacksmiths) they have a ceremony called *Kudiveppu* ceremony. When a brother is to be admitted, the wife's brother will be called and he performs this ceremony. The wife is seated in the centre and the husband and the brother-to-be-admitted are seated on her right and left, respectively. Then the wife's brother chants some *mantras* and throws rice, water and flowers on them. Through this ceremony a younger brother is allowed to share his elder brother's wife. Even among these people it is not compulsory that they should perform the ceremony before admitting a brother to the polyandrous union.

Among the polyandrous Nairs and the lower castes, the general rule is that the elder brother contracts the marriage, then the younger brother or brothers will be admitted later on. But there are exceptions to this rule. I know of cases where the elder brother first married, and then the younger brother shared the elder brother's wife. After the death of this common wife or after she was divorced the younger brother married and the elder brother shared the wife of the younger brother. In very few cases, the younger brother married first and then the elder brother was admitted to this union.

The transition from the non-fraternal to the fraternal polyandry system among the Nairs, might have originated in feudal times, when every householder had to render some service to the landlord. The property belonged to a chief or the ruler. The tenant had to wait upon the landlord or do service at the chief's or ruler's palace for so many days or months a year. If the landlord stayed far away the tenant could not go frequently to his house. So his brother was deputed to look after his lands and his family affairs, during his absence from home, and this brother lived in the household of the elder brother and associated with his wife. So in some cases polyandry was brought about by circumstances and was resorted to according to the needs and requirements of each individual family. Another factor which helped in the development of the fraternal polyandry system was the transition from the matrilocal to the patrilocal system of residence. All the polyandrous families which I have investigated in Chadayamangalam, Koodal and Edappon, all in the district of Quilon of Travancore, follow the patrilocal system of residence. Thus the feudal system combined with the transition from the matrilocal to patrilocal system of residence, might have brought about the change from the non-fraternal to the fraternal type of polyandry.

Various reasons can be assigned for the practice of polyandry at the present time in Travancore. One of the chief causes is eco-

nomic. The income of one earning member is not always sufficient to support a family. Therefore, if two brothers join together and keep a common wife, and the income pooled, they would be materially better off. An Asari-Carpenter—(*Raman*) in Chadayamangalam admitted his younger brother (*Pappu*) to a polyandrous union due to the influence of his wife (*Kamalakshi*). His wife's main consideration was economic. She was a spendthrift and she wanted to spend money on cosmetics, expensive sarees and other luxuries and she wanted to see cinema shows at least once or twice a week. For all these, the husband's income was not sufficient. So she persuaded her husband to admit his younger brother to their union; an additional reason being that in the event of some calamity happening to one husband, the other would act as a 'steppeny'.

Another reason is to limit overcrowding in certain professions. In the course of my enquiry in Chadayamangalam (Quilon District), a Velan (*Madhavan*) revealed the fact that he and his brother (*Keshavan*) had a common wife (*Pankajakshi*) due to the desire to limit the number of sons, so that there may not be many entrants to their profession, viz., sorcery and black magic. Had these two brothers got separate families, the chances for the overcrowding of the profession were considerably greater.

Still another cause is the disparity in the ages of wife and husband. In my study in the village Koodal (Quilon District), I came across two cases where the disparity in age between wife and husband led to the union becoming polyandrous. In one case there was a difference of ten years and in the other case eight years, in their ages. The younger brothers of these two husbands were of the same age as the wives. So these women developed some sort of intimacy with the husbands' brothers and slowly they were admitted as 'associate' husbands with the consent of the elder brothers.

Sometimes a younger brother is admitted as an 'associate' husband to look after the property and manage the household affairs of the elder brother. For instance, in a Nair family in the village Chadayamangalam, Quilon District, the elder brother (*Sankaran*) married and set up a separate household. He was an *Anchel* peon (Post peon). He had to attend to his work from early morning till very late in the evening. He had nearly two and a half acres of land. Since he had no spare time to look after the cultivation, the land was lying fallow and the yield from the coconut trees was becoming less and less every year. After walking about eight to ten miles in the course of his duties every day, he was unable to look after the household affairs. He continued like this for nearly eight years. From this union he had three children. At this time his younger brother (*Govindan*) was out of work. Since there was no one to look after the property, the Post Peon asked his younger brother to stay with

him and manage his affairs. The whole responsibility was entrusted to him. In due course of time, the younger brother was admitted as an 'associate husband' of the wife (*Parukuttyamma*). From this polyandrous union, they had four children—two sons and two daughters. In this case another interesting thing to be noticed was that the junior husband was seven years younger than the common wife.

Another cause is that when a person does not want to take up the responsibility of setting up a separate household he joins his brother and shares a common wife. For instance, the elder brother (*Parameswaran Pillay*) in a Nair family in the village Koodal, Pathanapuram Taluk, Quilon District, was serving in the Travancore Nair Infantry. As he did not get much time to spend at home, he did not want to take up any family responsibility. So he asked his younger brother (*Kunju Krishna Pillay*) to marry and he shared the wife (*Paravathiamma*) of the younger brother. In this, the elder brother told me, he had no particular responsibility regarding this union. He simply lives as an 'associate' husband and enjoys a married life.

Sometimes when the younger brother's income is not sufficient to maintain a family, he shares the wife of his elder brother. In such cases the younger brother has no responsibility in running the family. The whole responsibility lies with the elder brother. The younger brother, whenever he feels that he is in a position to maintain a family is free to marry and set up a separate family.

Yet another cause of polyandry is to keep the ancestral property together and to show unity, love and harmony among brothers.

In order to regulate the sexual life of the 'associate' husbands and the common wife and to avoid unpleasant surprises, different procedures are followed. In one case in a Nair Family at Edappon, Mavelikara Taluk, Quilon District, the junior husband (*Chandrasekharan Pillay*), after marriage, started a 'tea shop'. The senior husband (*Narayana Pillay*) looked after the property and agriculture. In the night when one brother was at home, the other slept at the 'tea shop'. The next day, the one who slept at the 'tea shop' last night remained with the wife, and the other one slept in the 'tea shop'. Thus by turn they remained with the wife.

In another case in a Nair Family in the village Koodal, Pathanapuram Taluk, Quilon District, the associate husbands and the common wife live in a separate house near the ancestral house. The mother of the 'associate' husband is alive. She lives in the ancestral home with her unmarried sons and daughters. The elder brother (*Appu Kuttan Nair*) once or twice a week, after dinner, goes to sleep in the ancestral home. This is an indication that the younger brother (*Sukumaran Nair*) is allowed to be with the wife (*Janakiamma*). If the elder brother wants to remain with the wife, after dinner, he

will ask the younger brother to go and sleep in the ancestral home. In another case, if the elder brother does not want to be with the wife, he will sleep on the verandah. It gives an indication that the younger brother can have access to the wife. If the elder brother wishes to be with the wife he will sleep in her room. In some families the husbands and the wife have got separate rooms and the wife decides with whom she would like to spend the night. In some other cases there will be some understanding between the husbands and they fix certain days for each to be with the wife. Thus there are various methods of adjustment.

The children of the polyandrous union are considered common to all the husbands and no exclusive paternity is claimed by any one of them. In order to distinguish one brother from the other, the children call the eldest as *Valiachan* or *Valiappan* or *Muthachan* or 'elder father', and the youngest as *Kochachan* or *Kochappan* or *Elayachan* or 'younger father'. In a blacksmith's family in the village Koodal, Pathanapuram Taluk, Quilon District, the children call the eldest as *Achan* and the youngest as *Achachan*.

My enquiry on some of the polyandrous families in Chandayamangalam and Koodal, revealed that where there is less difference of age between the 'associate' husbands and the common wife, the polyandrous union goes on fairly smoothly and the brothers are more likely to live together in harmony. But when the wife shows partiality to one husband, in most cases to the husband who is near about her age, there arise quarrels between the brothers and the wife. Where quarrels take place frequently, that may lead to much complication amounting to separation, divorce and other untoward happenings. Divorce among the Nairs and the lower castes is easy and without penalty. A man can sever connection with his wife by intimating to her his intention of doing so. A woman, likewise, can divorce her husband or husbands, at her pleasure. Divorce takes place on the mere whim and caprice of any one of the parties to a union who feels dissatisfied with the other. Marriage among the Nairs and the lower castes can be described as being 'contracted with a wink and divorced with a kick.'

CASE No. 1

(Koodal, Pathanapuram Taluk, Quilon District)

A Blacksmith (Kollan) and his younger brother had six sons and only one daughter, from their common wife. The eldest son married and he allowed one of his brothers to live with his wife. The fourth son married and as dowry got Rs. 300/- and ornaments worth £2. With this amount he purchased ten cents of land and erected a small house

and workshop also on this plot of land. This land was in the name of his wife. His wife was very cunning and clever. Since the income of her husband was not sufficient to maintain the family she compelled the younger brother of her husband to associate with them. Moreover, his mother also advised him to join with his elder brother. According to the custom of their community, when a younger brother was admitted as an 'associate' husband, they had to go through the *Kudiveppu* ceremony. But in this case, without performing the *Kudiveppu* ceremony, the younger brother was admitted to this polyandrous union, with the consent of the senior husband. Both the husbands were handing over their income to the common wife and she was managing all the household affairs. Two daughters were born to their joint association. The wife was partial to the junior husband and as a result of this there used to be quarrels between the two brothers. So one day the younger brother deserted them, and after some time, married another woman and set up a separate household. At this juncture, the youngest brother of the senior husband, felt pity on him. He thought that his brother alone could not maintain the family and save a good amount for the dowry of his two daughters. So he decided to join in the polyandrous union. Moreover, his mother encouraged him to help his elder brother by joining in the union. This time also without performing the *Kudiveppu* ceremony, another brother was allowed to live with the wife of the elder brother. By this union they had a daughter.

There is perfect harmony between the two brothers and they claim to be leading a happy married life.

CASE No. 2

(*Chadayamangalam, Kottarakara Taluk, Quilon District*)

When X (Asari or Carpenter) was 25, he married his preferential mate, *i.e.*, his mother's brother's daughter. Prior to the marriage there was an understanding with the wife's parents and brothers that she would be the common wife of two brothers. The *Kudiveppu* ceremony was performed after the marriage and through this ceremony the younger brother was admitted to polyandrous union. On the occasion of *Onam*—the national festival of the Malayalis—the wife went to her home for celebrating the festival. According to the existing custom of the Asaris, the husband should visit the wife at her house on the *Onam* day and present new clothes to his wife and her relatives. Due to shortage of money, X gave only a piece of cloth to his wife and had nothing to offer to her relatives. At this the relatives, especially the wife's elder brother, became very angry and refused to send his wife with him.

After five years, X's second younger brother decided to marry. The marriage was settled and the date was announced and all arrangements were made. On the marriage day, he had a swelling on the left leg and he could not move a single step. So X was deputed to marry on his behalf and they decided to share the wife. After the marriage, through *Kudiveppu* ceremony, the younger brother was admitted to the union. The wife was very cunning and clever and within one year she attracted all the other three brothers and thus for some time she was the common wife of five brothers. After two years the younger brother of X died.

The wife was more attached to the two junior husbands and so there were constant quarrels among the four husbands. After a lapse of three years, the two junior husbands married another woman and set up another family. So two brothers were left in this union.

This wife had no child. So the junior husband wanted to set up another family. But when the common wife came to know about it, she threatened him saying that in case he married another woman, she would kill both of them. Then he requested her to bring a relative of hers as his wife. This also she refused. In the course of my interview with him, he remarked that his life with this woman was a hell for him and he, some how or the other, wanted to get rid of this burden. He added that on one or two occasions he contemplated to commit suicide or to run away from the home. The main difficulty in his way of escape was that the property and the house belong to him and this woman would not part with it.

CASE No. 3

(*Koodal, Pathanapuram Taluk, Quilon District*)

X (a Nair) married a woman, not related to him in any way. He, with the consent of his wife, allowed all his brothers to associate with her. Among the Nairs there is no ceremony or ritual for admitting the younger brothers to the polyandrous union. All the five brothers lived together with the common wife for about fifteen years and during this period two children were born to them. There used to be quarrels among the brothers. So two younger brothers of X married and set up two separate households. Another brother died. So the eldest and youngest of all, were left with the common wife. They lived together with the wife till her death.

After the death of the first wife, X married a second time and this time also he allowed his younger brother to live with his wife. But after six months the marriage was dissolved at the instance of the wife.

X again married and this time, too, the younger brother was admitted to the polyandrous union. This woman died in childbirth.

Then the younger brother married a divorced woman and X, the elder brother, was allowed to associate with his wife. From this union, they had three children.

(Note : The personal names used in this paper are pseudo names. The real names are not revealed for obvious reasons).

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TRADE PATTERNS IN NORTHERN LAOS

JOEL MARTIN HALPERN

Since the author has lived in Laos for less than a year, this paper is more a general survey than an analysis in depth. If anything, it should emphasize the large gaps existing in our knowledge of this area, from the point of view of economic, social and cultural anthropology. As is the case with countless other societies throughout the world, the people of Laos are going through a period of change. Culture change is, of course, an ever-present phenomenon, but few will doubt that its rate has increased greatly in recent years—as an outgrowth of closer contacts among peoples, directly and indirectly resulting from wars and the aspirations of new nations as well as by planned development and aid programs. In northern Laos there are a number of different peoples whose positions range from that of an almost entirely subsistence economy to that based primarily on barter and cash trade. It is the trade relations and economic interdependencies among these peoples which I wish to present here.

First, it may be well to give the basic geographic and ethnographic facts of the situation. Although northern Laos, arbitrarily defined in this paper as the area north of the administrative capital of Vientiane, consists of some six of the twelve provinces in the Kingdom, the present discussion is mainly with direct reference to the province of Luang Prabang, where most of the author's field experience has been concentrated. Nevertheless, most of the following comments apply to neighboring provinces as well.

Two of the most salient characteristics of northern Laos are immediately visible to the airborne traveller: a mountainous terrain and very sparse and scattered settlements. If the plane happens to be following the winding course of the Mekong, the chief communication artery of Laos and main river of Indochina, he will see settlements clustered along the embankments. Veering away from the river, he will spot houses right on mountain tops and on rugged slopes as well as in valleys. He is seeing a textbook example of ethnic stratification based on varying geographical adaptations.

In the valleys along the Mekong and its tributaries dwell the Lao, the dominant group politically, economically and socially. They are Buddhists, and their linguistic, religious and other cultural affiliations are with the Lao of northern Thailand. In villages and in the few small towns, bamboo and thatch houses on stilts are the characteristic Lao homes. Paddy rice of the glutinous variety, the Lao food staple, is the principal crop, supplemented by small vegetable gardens and the

keeping of chickens and some pigs. For the majority who live along the rivers there is also fishing. Except in time of extreme drought, the Lao easily produce enough to feed themselves. Most Lao are largely self-sufficient and are not motivated to produce surpluses for market. An exception is in the case of fresh produce for Luang Prabang town, the royal capital of Laos and largest town in the north, and, to a much lesser extent, for some of the other smaller towns in northern Laos. It should be mentioned, however, that in these areas the commercial activities are almost exclusively in the hands of Chinese and Vietnamese merchants. There are also some itinerant Cambodian cloth merchants.

Inhabiting mountain slopes above the Lao are the Khamu. (The Lao call them Kha, or slave, although recently the term Lao Teng—Lao of the Mountains—has been considered more acceptable, whereas in their own language Khamu means "We the people"). They are the aboriginal people of Laos and are, on the whole, darker skinned and of shorter stature than the Lao. Their economy emphasizes slash-and-burn agriculture and the gathering of forest products. Many have tended to become Laotianized, and their way of life has lost much of its former distinctiveness, although the Khamu language is quite separate, being a member of the Indonesian family. This lack of cultural integration may be one of the reasons why Protestant missionaries in northern Laos have succeeded in making converts from among the Khamu.

The third group, those who live on the tops of mountains, are the Meo. Their scattered settlements are small, consisting of two or three to a dozen plank houses built directly on the ground. The majority of Meo in Luang Prabang province are from neighboring Xieng Khouang. The Meo are relatively recent arrivals in Laos, having migrated from China within the last hundred years or so. Their religion is a type of shamanism, and their linguistic ties are with the tribes to the north in Yunnan and to the northwest in Thailand and Burma. Crops are raised exclusively by slash-and-burn, new fields being cleared on the faces of the mountains each year. The chief cash crop is opium. Both glutinous and non-glutinous rice, plus corn and some vegetables are raised. Meo livestock includes small horses used for transport over the steep mountain trails. A unique feature of the Meo is their dress. Men wear black trousers and a short open jacket, with bright red sash around the waist. Depending upon the sub-group to which they belong, women wear either similar trousers, with a long colorful apron in front, or a short, pleated skirt adorned with indigo-dyed *batik* designs. Almost all the fabric used for their clothing is obtained through trade, much of it being manufactured fabric. Both sexes wear large silver collars, often several of them, depending upon the wealth of the family.

A most interesting feature of trade in northern Laos is the institution of *lam* (this term designates the institution as well as the individual carrying out the functions of Lam). A person acts as intermediary between traders and the government on the one hand, and the tribal peoples—usually the Khamu and sometimes the Meo—on the other. The Lam himself is a Lao, most often inhabiting a village that has relatively good access to markets. He is frequently a village or district headman.

Traditionally the Khamu came to him whenever they had some forest products to sell or wanted to buy salt or clothing. Then the Lam would arrange the trade with a merchant, although he himself sometimes engaged in commerce directly with the tribal peoples. Lam is distinctly a reciprocal relationship: head taxes levied by the French were often paid for by the Lam, and in return the Khamu worked in the fields of their Lam, when necessary and supplied him with game and forest products he might need. In those cases where the Lam was also their merchant he enjoyed a complete monopoly, with all their trade funneled through him. The relationship between a Lam and the Khamu was not formalized and depended largely on individual personalities. Thus a man might be the Lam for a few tribal families or for entire villages. He might be the Lam to these people by inheriting the position from his father; or, if the Khamu found that he was dishonest in his dealings, they could seek another.

Today the institution of Lam has begun to disintegrate to a certain extent. Most Meo no longer use it, since many Meo men now speak a little Lao and are capable of handling their own affairs. [Lam was never of primary importance among the Meo since much of their opium trade was traditionally carried on directly with the Hô (Lao name for Yunnanese) who traveled in horse caravans throughout northern Laos.]

Some Khamu, too, are beginning to speak Lao and to learn how to transport and market goods for themselves. They are legally regarded as equals to the lowland Lao under the present Lao constitution, and their feelings of inferiority have somewhat lessened. Also, significant numbers of Khamu have moved from the mountainsides down to the valleys and have begun to adopt aspects of Lao culture. In most cases there has not been much conflict with the Lao, since even the valley areas are usually underpopulated.

The institution of Lam has, however, far from disappeared. Even today a French merchant obtains benzoin and stic-lac through a Lam and not directly from the Khamu gatherers themselves. This is no doubt due to the fact that most of the benzoin is obtained from rather remote forest areas and must be painstakingly collected in small amounts over a long period of time. According to reports,

the traditional pattern of Lam exists almost unchanged in the province of Phong Saly.

In northern Laos there are three means of transporting trade goods. The most important are by Lao dugout (*pirogue*), often with motor, and by antiquated river barge on the Mekong. Small commercial airplanes carry goods north from Vientiane and link the small towns in the north with the town of Luang Prabang. In the dry season, when the 400 kilometer road between the administrative and royal capitals is open, jeeps and trucks connect villages along the route. Thus, in previously isolated areas there are now Lao settlements with landing fields, as well as villages along the river or the road which serve as trading centers for the mountain peoples. In fact, in some cases entire Lao villages have shifted their sites to the roadside in order to set up shops.

In contrast to the towns, the usual pattern in these Lao trading villages is for business to be in the hands of a few Lao part-time merchants. This is a convenient arrangement, as they are able to tend their crops in the rainy season, when trade is reduced. Very little capital is necessary to open a shop—and the store itself is more often than not simply the threshold of the owner's house, heaped with a few bolts of manufactured black cotton broadcloth to sell to the Meo, some locally-woven blue-black indigo homespun for trade with the Khamu, a row of flashlight batteries, a few bars of soap, a basket of nails. In addition to these village shops there are other Lao merchants who obtain a small stock of goods in Luang Prabang and during the dry season go directly to the upland tribal villages.

Both the Meo and the Khamu supply the Lao middlemen with a variety of vegetables and forest products in return for manufactured or semifinished goods. For example, in exchange for their opium the Meo obtain cloth, salt and iron bars which their smiths forge into tools. A not insignificant amount of the product is consumed by the cultivators themselves, however.

Some small Meo settlements about 35 kilometers from Luang Prabang have begun to market certain fresh produce for which there is a ready market in town. Another important trade item of both Neo and Khum is charcoal, consumed in large quantities, since it provides the fuel for the power station of the royal capital. This type of trade has become sufficiently significant to some Meo to have caused them to shift their settlements to mountaintops closer to town. As a result of both increased contact and increased cash, occasional Meo homes afford luxuries such as kerosene and even powdered coffee.

Of great importance to the Neo is their silver currency, in the form of small ingots as well as the heavy neck collars and bracelets. Even today most Meo refuse to accept paper money, and old Burmese and

Chinese coins are melted down in Luang Prabang and fashioned into bars specifically for trade with the Meo.

Opium is still unquestionably of vital importance to Meo economy (and for this reason the Lao government has not formally banned local trade in it); yet now-a-days Meo purchases may just as likely have been paid for with a load of potatoes or charcoal. Some Meo have been taking unusual initiative in the marketing of their produce: recently one group, dissatisfied with the prices they were getting for their potatoes from a Vietnamese middleman in Luang Prabang, rented space on a river barge and took about a ton of potatoes down the Mekong to the capital to sell. When the produce was marketed they made the return trip to Luang Prabang by plane.

Trade relations between the Khamu and the Lao are closer and more direct than those of the Meo and the Lao. This is due to their greater accessibility, their traditional dependence upon the Lao for transporting and marketing and their lack of a high yield cash crop. The chief trade items of the Khamu are forest products, wild game and often rice (although sometimes they have to buy rice from the Lao when their own crops fail). Woven bamboo sleeping mats, low bamboo stools and a variety of basketry used in all Lao homes are almost exclusively a Khamu craft. It is the Khamu who supply the neat packets of banana leaves, used for wrapping food at market. In the Luang Prabang area betel nut and the special leaves to wrap it in for chewing is a significant trade item so much so that it has promoted stability in certain villages which, because of easy access to this commodity, are reluctant to follow the usual pattern of shifting village sites every few years.

The Khamu require the same basic trade goods as do the Meo—cloth, salt, iron. They do little weaving, yet most of their clothing is hand-woven. This is because Lao women, proficient weavers, prepare lengths of indigo-dyed fabric for men's garments and skirt pieces in the dark striped tones preferred by Khamu women, and these goods are set aside in village shops for exchange when the Khamu descend to barter. Like most mountain people, the Khamu strongly distrust paper currency and, when not paid in kind, insist upon being paid in old silver coin, which cannot be destroyed easily, as paper can, and the value of which can be judged by illiterate people.

Often the Khamu lack sufficient goods to trade, and they are forced to work for the Lao as coolies or servants. Some are employed in almost all Lao settlements, even small villages, and a fairly large number have been attracted to Luang Prabang. Groups of young men usually come together, frequently walking over the mountains for more than a week to reach the town. They come after clearing the *rai* in January-February, in three different periods between weedings and after the harvest (October-November).

There are two types of employment arrangements with these coolies; they receive a cash wage for the day's work and provide their own food and shelter, or they are given a token cash payment plus food, clothing and a place to sleep. The latter is usually the case for domestic servants, who are more or less permanently employed. Temporary coolies however, such as those periodically hired for road repairs, usually work for a month or so, until they have earned enough money to purchase the items for which they originally came to town.

To summarise :

Although the institution of *lam* has begun to decline, it is still of significance in Lao-Khamu trade.

The high cash yield of opium has enabled the Meo to obtain a relatively independent position, with a favorable balance of trade. Further, the value of their other crops is steadily increasing.

In contrast, the Khamu, who have no such high yield cash crop, have in many cases sought wage labor. This manual labor follows a seasonal pattern and is generally based on the immediate and personal needs of the individual.

The various peoples of northern Laos are being drawn more and more into links of inter-dependency, especially now with increases in means of transportation and the growing availability of consumer goods.

This paper has merely touched on trade patterns in the north of Laos. Further investigations of the impact of these emerging trade relationships on the social structure and general culture of the peoples concerned should be of great interest.

ROBERT REDFIELD (1898—1958)

On October 16, at Chicago, U.S.A., in Billings Hospital, Prof. Robert Redfield, eminent anthropologist and University Professor of Anthropology, Chicago University, died at the age of 60. He was suffering from lymphatic leukemia for about three years. The end came suddenly and the world has lost a noted anthropologist and an able field scientist. Indian anthropologists feel the loss deeply, as during the last few years his interest in Indian anthropology brought him in close comradeship with anthropologists interested in rural research. Many of these were trained by Prof. Redfield and many were looking forward to work with him and under his guidance. A couple of years ago, Prof. Redfield visited India and met Indian anthropologists at several university centres, and his personality, humility and understanding endeared him to all those who came in contact with him. He took part in a seminar on Indian sociology at Madras, and guided the deliberations of this seminar with knowledge and competence.

By the death of Prof. Redfield, Indian anthropology loses a dynamic personality and an eminent scholar from whom workers in the same and allied fields in India expected sustained contribution in rural anthropology. He set a standard of field work, which will continue to inspire Indian anthropology and his many concepts in the context of Indian social anthropology will orient anthropologists to theoretical studies.

D.N.M.

The following Obituary notice appeared in the New York Times, Friday, October 17, 1958.

"ROBERT REDFIELD, EDUCATOR, IS DEAD

Anthropologist at the U. of Chicago 1927-49 Studied Concept of Folk Society.

Chicago, Oct. 16—Dr. Robert Redfield, noted anthropologist and University of Chicago Professor, died today in Billings Hospital. His age was 60. He had been ill for three years with lymphatic leukemia.

Dr. Redfield was regarded as one of World's foremost authorities on the process by which primitive people meet the transition to modern society. He had been a visiting professor and lecturer at universities in Paris, India and Peiping.

A native of Chicago, Dr. Redfield joined the University of Chicago faculty in 1927. He had obtained a law degree there in 1921. He received a doctorate in anthropology from the University in 1928 and later was named Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Professor of Anthropology.

From 1934 to 1946, Dr. Redfield served as dean of the university's Division of Social Sciences. He was chairman of the Department of Anthropology from 1947 to 1949, resigning to devote full time to research and teaching.

Dr. Redfield was best known as an authority on life in primitive villages in Mexico, Yucatan and Guatemala, and had written several books concerning his research there. He was credited with evolving the concept of a folk society serving as a bridge between primitive savage life and more highly organized society.

In 1944, Dr. Redfield was President of the American Anthropological Association and a director of the American Council on Race Relations. From 1930 to 1943 he was in charge of ethnological and sociological field work of the Carnegie Institution in Washington. He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Philosophical Society.

Surviving are his widow, the former Margaret Park, daughter of the late Dr. Robert Park, University of Chicago sociologist; two daughters, Mrs. Lisa Peattie of Brooklyn Heights, New York, and Mrs. Joanna Gutman of Chicago, and a son, James M., a student at the University of Chicago."

RESEARCH NEWS AND VIEWS

One of the articles entitled 'Male/Female Birth Ratio of Europeans in West Africa', by M. D. W. Jeffreys, published in *African Medical Journal*, Vol. 31, December 1957, will certainly catch the attention of medical men and biologists, for further investigation in human reproductive physiology and metabolism. This is a research article of its kind, in which the author has tried to analyse various theories regarding the behaviour of human spermatozoa, taking into account the influence of various environmental factors on them, so as to interpret his own findings in a more scientific manner.

The author has endeavoured to find out the causes and basic facts of divergence between the male/female birth ratio of Europeans living in Europe and that of Europeans in West Africa. Taking into consideration the normal male/female birth ratio for *Homo Sapiens* as a genus ranges from 1,040—1,060 boys to 1,000 girls, the two sets of figures for this ratio obtained by the author among the European population of Nigeria do not conform with the pattern for the genus. One set of figures for the healthy highlands of the Jos plateau shows 1,135 boys to 1,000 girls, and the other set of figures from hot humid tropical Nigeria gives 733 boys to 1,000 girls.

After examining the effect of climate upon European health in the tropics, as well as the role of X and Y carrying sperms the author concludes that any adverse factor in the system of the male that affected his metabolism and the vitality of the sperms, would have an adverse effect upon the Y carrying sperm than on the X carrying sperm. This would naturally reduce the chances of the Y carrying sperms fertilizing the ova, and as a consequence of this change there would be automatically a decrease in the number of male born. But the author finally remarks that his conclusion is subject to reservation, because of the prophylactic daily dose of 5 grains of quinine, which might have produced adverse effect.

The Boskop 'Race' Problem by Dr. Ronald Singer, appearing in *Man*, Vol. LVIII, Nov. 1958, is of great interest in anthropological literature, because of the fact that it throws new light on the evolutionary trends concerning the Boskop concept. Dr. Singer deserves the credit for his arduous efforts in carrying out a survey of all Southern African skeletal material, so as to present certain basic facts and discrepancies pertaining to the concept of the Boskop 'race', or what has been called the 'Middle Stone Age Physical Type'.

Dr. Singer maintains that "in terms of African racial types, the features exhibited by the Boskop skull and those which have been termed 'Boskopoid' are not specific to any 'new' single African racial group". Dr. Singer supports this thesis by presenting his observations that in Africa the features exhibited by them may be observed in varying degrees in the Bushmen, Hottentots, or Bushmen-Hottentot admixtures, the emphasis being on the Hottentot strain. So far as the involvement of a Negroid element in the make-up of the Boskop skull is concerned, it still awaits explanation. Dr. Singer continues in support of his contention that the dominant features of most of the crania from the same site where the so-called Boskopoid types have been discovered were either Bushmen or Hottentot. Again when a cranium was found to exhibit one or more features exaggerated, it was called Boskopoid, and as a result of it all the large skulls selected from the excavation were levelled Boskopoid.

Finally Dr. Singer pronounces that there is no justification or realism in creating a new racial type after the Boskop skull, in the presence of other types which properly explain its genetic make-up. Boskop should be referred only to the type specimen—a large calvarium of Bush-Hottentot nature found on a farm near Boskop in the Transvaal.

Writing in the article "Some Possibilities of Measuring Selection Intensities in Man", published in the February 1958 issue of *Human Biology*, Vol. 30, No. 1, James F. Crow suggests that the selection intensity may be measured at three levels—total, phenotypic, and genotypic.

The author enumerates that an index of total selection is obtained by the ratio of the variance in number of progeny per parent to the square of the mean number. Here the parents and offspring are assumed to be counted at the same age (say, at birth), but those that die before reproducing are labelled as having zero progeny.

So far as the assessment of phenotypic selection is concerned, it is based on a procedure of Haldane's ('54b, *The Measurement of Natural Selection*, *Caryologia* 6, Suppl. 1,480). The genotypic selection according to the author, is measured in terms of the genetic load, comprising many possible components of which only three have been considered here, namely, the extent to which the population is impaired by recurrent mutation termed as mutational load, by segregation from unfixable superior genotypes known as segregation load, and lastly by parental child incompatibility termed as incompatibility load. The mutation load is strictly proportional to the mutation rate, whereas the segregation load is almost independent of it. The

mutation load is particularly favourable to inbreeding, hence its study among the children of consanguineous marriages will be of interest.

The International Social Science Bulletin (UNESCO) has devoted a full issue (Vol. 10, No. 3, 1958) to the very important subject of race relations. This has always been a very important and a highly controversial topic to which politicians, biologists, and social scientists have contributed from time to time.

The present issue contains four papers on race relations: Britain by Anthony H. Richmond, East Africa by Barbara E. Ward, Federal Republic of Germany by Kirpal S. Sodhi, and United States of America by Herbert Bluemer.

The Bulletin intends to follow up the present series by publishing articles summarizing what has been achieved in this field in South Africa, South East Asia and the South Pacific.

In the *Social and Economic Studies* Vol. 7, No. 2, June 1958, Andrew W. Lind, has contributed a paper on "Adjustment Patterns Among the Jamaican Chinese". The paper is based on the findings of an exploratory study, focussing its attention mainly on the social change among the Chinese in Jamaica. The conflict and accommodative phases of the Chinese experience in Jamaica are not always clearly differentiable from the impersonal and competitive aspects of the process. The most obvious but by no means the only, basis of conflict between the Chinese and the other ethnic groups in Jamaica was the struggle for economic position.

In the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Autumn 1958, William H. Wainwright, M.D., of the Department of Psychiatry, Cornell University Medical College has contributed a short but interesting paper on "Cultural Attitudes and Clinical Judgment".

Two cases have been quoted in this paper. They are of patients with schizophrenic reactions who were presented to the resident staff of a private psychiatric hospital. Although the two cases were of striking similarity in symptoms, behaviour, duration of illness and courses prior to hospitalization, the comments by members of the staff were vastly different in respect to progress. Their comments

reflected their own cultural backgrounds, standards and goals rather than a realistic appraisal of the patient's probable progress.

The early spread of Christianity in the various parts of the Old World is a problem with which Biblical scholars have been concerned for a long time. It appears that South India was one of the first few regions which got the wave of the new faith. The problem is being re-examined by Paolo Daffina in a series of papers in the *East and West*. Volume 9, No. 3, September 1958, issue carries the first part of this study. The paper seeks to examine the problem on the basis of Biblical literature, archaeological and historical knowledge and folk lore in Southern India.

REVIEWS

CITADEL, MARKET AND ALTAR By SPENCER HEATH, PUBLISHED BY THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY FOUNDATION, INC., ROADSEND GARDENS, ELKRIDGE, 1502 MONTGOMERY ROAD, BALTIMORE, MD.

Citadel, Market and Altar, a book outlining Socionomy, the new natural science of society and giving glimpses of what the author conceives as an 'emerging society', is, no doubt, 'a book of ideas that are refreshingly new'. Mr. Spencer Heath, the author of the book, who combines in him the engineer and the philosopher, deserves congratulations for analysing the historical and the human field from an altogether different but fresh perspective.

Socionomy, as outlined by the author, enquires into the conditions which insure harnessing of societal energy, because, like any other energy, it is derived from the Universal Cosmos and endures through the spontaneous and reciprocal interfunctioning of its units which are basically similar and constitute energy in question (pages 4,6 & 7). Analysis of population therefore is the first step in social analysis as population represents 'energy in action'. Positive quality of energy lies in its power to make or create (page 18) and therefore qualitative potentialities of the population-energy lie not in quantity but in higher number of life-years, which represent 'the time potential of the energy units that constitute organisation or stream.'

Societal energy flows out of the organisation which springs from the spontaneous and contractual interfunctioning of its units, i.e., individuals, and derives its enduring vitality therefrom. Collision or conflict, the negation of contractual relationships, gives rise to deterioration and shortening of human lives whereas freedom for contractual engagements brings forth a multiplication of exchanges and production, improvement in environment and growth of a richer and longer life for humans. Freedom for contractual relationship, as determined by the historical-social growth, lies 'in the democracy of the market', in the 'energy of exchange' and in the institution of property, i.e., the system of owning rights and privileges pertaining to objects, material and non-material. Security, property and spirituality are the three requirements on which depends the continuity of a 'positive' social organisation. These are supplied through the institutions of politics and government, of commerce and trade, and of religion and arts.

Citadel, Market and Altar symbolize these three institutions which can assure a positive social organisation only when they are free to develop, to differentiate and to interact. Social evolution, as interpreted by the author, has tended to move in the direction of freedom

of contract, although its natural culmination has been marred by the Citadel, which has tended to become all-powerful. Taxation, on which the Citadel depends, takes away the larger productive potential of the community. Tax, therefore, need be replaced by rent which is charged for the services rendered by the owners of property. In retrospect and prospect, the author views the emergence of a social system, based on the freedom of contract and free exchange, in which tax has been replaced by rent and the politician by the owner of the community service(s), in which there is a free flow of the creativity of man resulting in a richer, economic, social and spiritual life. The author rejects revolution because, as he puts it, social ideal is to be attained not in revolt or submission but in new awakenings to the basic realities and the high potentialities of the social heritage as it now exists! To him the collectivist ideal is inherent in the existing system only if 'its creative technique of contractual services for voluntary recompense and automatic values is permitted to expand' (page 107).

Thus, the foregoing analytical review of Mr. Heath's thesis reveals that freedom for contractual relationships and exchange stands for the means as well as for ends of human society as it is through these that a 'positive' social organisation can be attained and the creative flow of population-energy can be canalised. Ownership, contract and exchange, no doubt, are fundamental to the socio-economic base of human social life but they do not stand by themselves alone and posit their own problems. As for example, division of labour and specialization imply exchange which further implies scarcity of goods and, whatever its form, will give to the societal members less than they want and certainly less than they might conceivably have. It is on the distributive level that one man's interest is opposed to another's interest (Davis, Kingsley: *Human Society*, page 451) which only freedom for contract and exchange cannot canalise. On the other hand, 'pure contractual relation is virtually non-existent in actual practice. There are always non-contractual elements in every contract situation' (ibid: page 471). Mr. Heath does not take into account the role of these non-contractual elements in outlining his 'emerging society.' This is because he draws a close analogy between social and natural orders and virtually pleads for a return to *laissez-faire* according to which things settle down in the long run. But can freedom for contract and exchange and *laissez-faire* have a smooth sail when 'haves' and 'havenots', 'privileged' and 'non-privileged', 'developed' and 'undeveloped' exist side by side and man still thinks in terms of political boundaries and self-sufficient nations? *Laissez-faire* has been given a fairly long trial but it defeated itself. The course of events has conspired in such a way that today, nearly in all parts of the world, State has emerged as the principal agency speaking and acting on behalf of the community. Such a development has

its own advantages and disadvantages and has stimulated an unreconciled controversy. But the main question is 'Can we go back and start anew?' Of course in utopian dreams, but not through the gateway of science.

Keen readers of Mr. Heath's thesis may not agree with him regarding his interpretation of history and its use in formulating his thesis. In the feudalistic set-up of the pre-Roman England, Mr. Heath finds the ideals of his emerging society realized. To him market, which has emerged out of the historical processes, is a democratizing force, tending to maintain exchange and proprietary community services. But can this be the only perspective of history? Marxists would definitely speak otherwise? Drawing mainly on the sources from the history of England, Laidler demonstrates that the course of historical events has conclusively led to the rise of socialism (Laidler: *Socio-economic Movements*). To him socialization does not mean what it means to the author of *Citadel, Market and Altar*. In the absence of a well-defined and universally accepted perspective of history, a recourse to history to formulate a theory of social organization and social action is likely to render one unscientific. Mr. Heath, following a different path, has fallen in the very pitfalls in which staunch orthodox Marxists have already fallen. But, throughout the book, Mr. Heath seems to be unaware of it.

The thesis pervading *Citadel, Market and Altar*, has been built up on the analogies drawn between human-social and natural orders. Socionomy is mainly based on the extension of the principles of Physics and Biology to the human-social field. An individual represents energy in the way an atom does. Individuals are cells and society is an organism. Organization, interdependence and free exchange among the units of natural orders give energy, unity and endurance to them. But, can we extend the same principle to man, the unit of social organization and social energy, who with the help of technology destroys the natural balance and creates an artificial one for himself? Can we expect the automatic law of exchange, pervading the natural order, similarly operating in human society even when we grant the realm of culture and values to man? Yesterday's Sociology and Anthropology are full of such analogical approaches to human society and today we are well aware of their logical inconsistencies. Such analogies hardly help us to build up any sound, verifiable system of knowledge. This is not to deny the fruitfulness of analogies which are often a source of useful hypothesis. But, 'the use of analogy as a source of hypothesis is not without its dangers of course. There is reason to suspect any analogy from another science, since the models to be applied are clearly understood in their own theoretical framework but not related to the new frame of reference' (Goode and Hatt: *Methods in Social Research*, page 66).

The reviewer's approach has been that of the sociologist ; but the book under review, as the author of the foreword points out, owes nothing to contemporary Sociology, which has been defined by a perceptive Viennese wit 'as the use of a jargon invented for that purpose' (page v). From its very inception, Sociology has been used to such characterizations; even sociologists, sometimes, have felt dissatisfied with it. To quote Elton Mayo, 'Sociology is highly developed but mainly as an exercise in the acquisition of scholarship' (Mayo, Elton : *Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*). But, such laments and characterizations have been more in the form of looking before and after and building up what is naught. Sociological approach to human society has been getting more and more recognition in recent times because it has been demonstrated that mere subjective philosophy, based on 'de novo' and analogical approaches can hardly help us to have a sound knowledge of our society and to plan for a better one. We however do not deny the importance of social philosophy which has been very well emphasised by sociologists like Sorokin, Ginsberg and philosophers like Samuel Butler. But the need of the hour is not philosophy but empirically derived social philosophy which *Citadel, Market and Altar* can hardly account for.

G.S. Bhatt

LAND, MAN AND CULTURE IN MAINLAND SOUTH EAST ASIA, BY WILLIAM L. THOMAS, JR., PRIVATELY PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, GLEN ROCK, NEW JERSEY, 1957, pp. 195.

Land, Man and Culture in Mainland South East Asia is a new orientation in ethnographic literature, and will be welcome to many who want more than the details of cultural life, the inter-relation between man and nature. All through the discourse the author has analysed the concept of culture in a systematic manner, as was examined by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. The definitions, classified as descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural and genetic, are discussed excellently. The systems developed by the people who make use of or possess the phenomena are the basis of cultural data found by the geographers. The author aptly suggests that "people impose their own systems upon Nature and their own products; they have their own way of thinking about things and it is their system, not his own, which the geographer should try to discover, because inherent in cultural phenomena is the value-systems of the people who produce them." In this, the author is conscious of avoiding the extremist views of determinism and possibilism, but steers clear of the controversy to tread on the modified version of Vidal-de-la Blanche's dictum that "Man chooses the site as proposed by Nature

and then organises it in such a way that it meets its desires and wants”.

The author in a summary mentions the “comparison of the work of the geographers and between them and the anthropologists, which leads to outbring the various points of view by which inter-relations between man and nature are conceived, for values of the cultural emphases for geographic use vary with the man-nature relationship with which they are associated. Taking into account all emphases of the culture concept a consciousness of culture increases the importance of studying, consistently and cumulatively, man’s modification of the face of the Earth. A proposal is made for the classification of terminology, the culture-society distinction is further examined and eight statements are formulated setting forth our views of the values of the culture concept of Geography”.

The concept of culture in theory and practice and its employment in varying interpretations of man-nature relationships has been elaborately dealt with. The analysis can be of help in producing a number of statements as guides for field research and as common measures in the process of cultural adaptation and change. The value of geographic methodology of a fuller acceptance of a culture concept and its implications is barely mentioned. Further, he writes to suggest the total culture concept of geography, but reserves it for future research after testing the validity of some assumptions which he has mentioned in the last chapter.

As the work now stands, the author has certainly succeeded in giving a fairly comprehensive account of the significance of the concept of culture for geographic thought.

A. R. Tewari

INDIAN HEALTH IN ARIZONA, By BERTRAM S. KRAUS, WITH THE COLLABORATION OF BONNIE M. JONES. SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF ETHNIC RESEARCH, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, 1954, pp. 164.

Scientific studies of public health and growth of children certainly hold promise for the betterment of the human race. Recent development of interdisciplinary area of research in anthropology and medicine needs the attraction of more scientists in the field of public health and growth of children. And as such it is always welcome to have such types of researches from anthropologists. The book before us is an account of the intensive research on health status of the Indian tribes of Arizona in the United States of America. The publi-

cation is based on the data collected "in three summer months of field work at various reservation clinics and hospitals".

The book under review catches our eye in view of the fact that it contains chapters on Administration of Indian Health, cross-cultural factors in Health Administration (by W. S. King), the Indian population of Southern Arizona, the Indian out-patient, the Indian in-patient, the disease picture, Dental services, Growth and physical constitution of Indian Children, Diagnosis and Prognosis, and maps, tables and charts, along with a comprehensive bibliography at the end of each chapter.

A historical background of "Federal Health Aid" and "detailed organizational plan" of different areas together with titles (supplemented by maps) and names of key personnel have been excellently presented. A short account of "supplemental services in the nature of sanitation programmes, control for specific diseases and educational projects" also deserves mention.

Chapter II on "Cross cultural factors in Health Administration" based on the data of six weeks' investigation by William S. King is an informative, stimulating, and interesting one. The author has pointed out two important factors (viz., language barrier, and illiteracy) which are the main obstacles in communicating the modern medical principles from health workers to Indians. He further goes on to throw light on the native concepts concerning disease, causation and treatment, and the factors responsible for the willingness or unwillingness for the acceptance of modern medicine. All the information about the cultural traditions of the native population presented by W. S. King are undoubtedly of practical importance to the administrators as well as to the medical personnel, who are planning and serving the native population for their social and health improvement, respectively.

Chapter VI, "The Disease Picture", has been nicely dealt with so far as the description of the important diseases along with their prevalence among the Arizona tribes is concerned. The author has also done justice in tracing out certain correlations between certain disease and body build. This type of study is a recent development, and here he has definitely added something positive to our growing knowledge of the constitutional typologies.

Turning to the nutritional problem the author maintains that since there is no "accurate knowledge" of nutritional problem among Southern Arizona Indians, it is not possible to assess whether under-nutrition affects the health or plays an important role in the general disease picture among these Indians (p.103). Here the author, it is hoped, will not mind the reviewer's drawing attention to the nutritional problem which could have been included in this study. For instance, tuberculosis is one of the mass diseases which is identified with malnutrition and other hygienic factors. Similarly deficiencies

of certain vitamins and minerals lead to the development of nutritional diseases that finally do affect the health.

Dealing with obesity (on page 118) as a characteristic of the body builds of Pinia and Papago boys, the author has used the Wetzel Grid channels for the purpose of comparison with white children. One would think that a better and a more explicit and distinct classification of obesity could be arrived at by the use of Earle L. Reynold's and Toshjiko Asahawa's classificatory system (*Am. Jour. of Phy. Anth.*, No. 4, Vol. 6, Dec., 1948). Classification of obesity, according to these authors, should include at least three factors, body weight, some measure of the amount of fat present, and some measures of other tissues present. As a matter of fact what is needed here is to classify whether an individual is *truly obese* (should be excessively heavy in weight mainly derived from an excess accumulation of body fat) or *mixed obese* (based on excess accumulation of other tissues such as muscles, bone, along with adipose tissue). In addition to these, one more category of obesity should also be taken into consideration when an individual has a disproportionate amount of body fat, in contrast to muscle and bone, but not excessive overweight for his age and sex. Such individuals should be classified as *relatively obese*.

R. P. Srivastava

TRIBAL ECONOMY (AN ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE BAIGAS), BY D. S. NAG, PUBLISHED BY THE BHARATIYA ADIMJATI SEVAK SANGH, DELHI, 1958, PRICE Rs. 21.00, pp. xvii+418.

This, by far, is the best book published so far by the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh. It is also one of the best monographs on the economic life of an Indian tribe, and both the author and the publishers are to be congratulated on this achievement.

The Baiga are a primitive tribe in Madhya Pradesh who, till the other day, used to make a living by hunting and collecting produce and by shifting or axe cultivation (which they call *bewar*). Like most other tribes of India, the Baigas have been fighting, in the recent past, a battle of culture-contact against unsympathetic traders, contractors and money-lenders, and biased missionaries and social welfare workers. As a result of changed environment, the configuration of their culture is fastly changing. To organise a planned change among a people, it is essential that the administrators know about the structure of their cultural life. This is the applied value of such studies as the present one.

It is a comprehensive book with fourteen long chapters and seven appendices dealing with practically all the aspects of social economy, from simple collection or production to such specialised topics as

marketing and exchange, pattern of income and expenditure, indebtedness and its causes, and standard of living. A chapter has been devoted to an analysis of the technological, social and administrative factors underlying the transformation of Baiga economy, and another to the rehabilitation measures adopted by the Government in Baigaland. The treatment of the subject, on the whole, has been satisfactory, and only on very few occasions is the weakness of the author's observation, analysis, deduction or argument visible.

Unfortunately, the author has not told us much about the methods and techniques he employed for collecting and analysing his data. He has devoted a total of less than 1,000 words to acquaint the reader with the techniques he followed for collecting the data on the social economy of the Baigas. This could be briefly summed up as 'survey and questionnaire' technique.

In respect of techniques, the author has complained against social anthropology. His main complaint is that anthropologists in general and Indian anthropologists in particular have not written much on primitive economy, and that "they have been more interested in examining the social correlates of economic institutions than in examining the more specific economic implications of the data themselves....." In other words, he means that tribal studies are more social anthropological than economic. As it is, that is true. But may we ask why the anthropologist is to be blamed for a thing which hardly lies in his domain? The study of economic life, from the economic point of view—even of tribal communities—is legitimately the business of the economist rather than that of the anthropologist. And if the Indian economists have fought shy, in general, of empirical field studies, whose fault is it?

It is also wrong to say that anthropology has not developed proper techniques for field study. As a matter of fact, that is one thing the anthropologist takes legitimate pride in. His techniques may not be foolproof, but so far they have yielded highly reliable and rich information and some fundamental laws of society and human nature. We feel sure that if Dr. Nag had employed those techniques, his account of Baiga economy would have been far more intimate and convincing and of greater use to the social planner in the rehabilitation of the tribe. That would have been of lasting theoretical interest as well.

K. S. M.

THE DUBLAS OF GUJARAT BY P. G. SHAH, BHARATIYA ADIMJATI SEVAK SANGH, DELHI, PUBLISHED 1958, pp. xiii+353.

A book by P. G. Shah is welcome for more reasons than one. Mr. Shah has abundant administrative experience; he has a sound grip

on the tribal life and its problems, particularly of the area he lives in; he is deeply interested in problems of tribal rehabilitation, and he is a scientist by training. Anthropology is his hobby, but he beats the professional anthropologist in his wide interests and background knowledge. His approach in this book is 'total' in a sense, that is, he wants to get an all-round picture of the tribe, and the chapters that wind up the book indicate a range not yet covered in any monograph. If one has to view the book in the context of the coverage, one cannot expect an intensive fare, as the difficulties are too obvious. Mr. Shah had to work in collaboration with several scientists, and he could only record the findings as handed over to him. Here lies the difficulty of a 'total' approach and it is essentially this fact that has made the book appear somehow loosely integrated. Mr. Shah has worked with men who were billeted several tasks, and his role has been that of a compiler, yet with his scientific mind he has constructed a model of tribal research which is sure to appeal to a large section of his readers. Even then the conclusions are warranted and indicate the social and ethnic status of the Dublas, *via a vis* other tribes. Each one of the chapters, particularly those based on the medical survey, could have been more intensively done by the persons who had conducted the surveys themselves, but that is again a model which we cannot think of, particularly when the more established scientific disciplines do not have unqualified admiration for even the serious anthropologist.

The book on the whole is well documented, and written with sympathy and understanding. The author's rich experience and scientific training have made it possible for him to present the problems of tribal life of the Dublas in bold outlines and the book is sure to receive the attention it deserves.

The blurb is ambitious and the comparison made between Dr. C. V. Raman and Mr. Shah having both emerged as scientists from the ranks of administrators, may prejudice the readers against a really good fare.

E. T.

SINHALESE VILLAGE, BY BRYCE RYAN, IN COLLABORATION WITH L. D. JAYASENA AND D. C. R. WICKREMESINGHE, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PRESS, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, x+229 pp., (1958).

Prof. Bryce Ryan is Chairman of the Department of Sociology, Miami University, Florida; he was visiting professor, Cornell University in 1952-53, and for several years (1948-52) he was in charge of teaching and research in sociology at the University of Ceylon. The Junior members of the team were graduated from the University of Ceylon, and are now working as officers in the Transport and Social Services

Departments in Ceylon. Professor Ryan's other book, *Caste in Modern Ceylon*, was reviewed earlier in the columns of this journal. The expectations raised by his earlier book are pretty well fulfilled in this joint publication. Prof. Ryan here presents a fine study of rural Ceylon. The book departs from the usual type of rural studies. It is not a monograph, ethnographically oriented, it is not a detailed study of social structure on the lines of structural studies which British anthropologists have made their own; it is a study of Ceylonese rural society in transition; it is a study of cultural change no doubt, but yet not with an omnibus coverage. The second half of the book beginning with the chapter 'From Buddhism to the Wonderful World', followed by others on 'Social stratification', 'The Channels for Secularisation', 'Secularisation in Community Organisation', 'Secularisation in Culture and Values', 'Secularisation-Patterned Process', reflect the trends of Ceylon rural life. Cultural influences on Ceylon from India have been great, no doubt, but Buddhism has acted as it were, as a brake to ritualisation or 'Sanskritization'—a process which some believe to have preceded secularisation in India. The transformation process in rural Ceylon appears in a sense differently oriented and as such a comparative study of Indian village life and that of rural life in Ceylon is worth pursuing.

Many of the earlier papers by Dr. Murray, A. Straus and Bryce Ryan have depicted Ceylonese society as a loosely integrated one; probably it is so, and in this book Ryan and his junior colleagues analyse Ceylonese culture and values and find a loose link with their traditional past, which today it is not very easy to reconstruct. Even Buddhism appears to be a surface-dressing on a status structure, geared to feudalism and caste. Birth, and position by birth provide moorings for the pattern of behaviour and religion emphasises man's relationship to the universe, rather than to man's relationship with man. Writes the author, 'Beyond Buddhism the village accepted a natural world which when beyond his own control was guided by the powers of a demon world, a largely pantheon, on the planet gods' (p. 157). The wonderful world that is described is that of demons and gods, and a transformation of this to secular living and secular values is a process that deserves meticulous appraisal. Prof. Bryce Ryan nearly succeeds in doing so and the author boldly states, 'if Pelpola is pursuing an unsteady but persistent course in the implanting of secular traits in its traditional milieu, the introduction of these new and logically complicating modes has yielded nothing remotely resembling community chaos' (p. 188). Indian villages have undergone an orientation, to 'sanskritization' and de-sanskritization' and secularisation as a process has been accentuated by westernization. In Pelpola the process appears to be different and the gamut of change has not

included the same process as one finds in India. Buddhism has been the cause in Ceylon, Hinduism the consequence in India. The future of secularisation would depend on how soon secularisation can overtake Hinduism or as it stands now, the process of 'desanskritization' to use another clumsy concept. Prof. Ryan sounds an optimistic note, one very much relevant in the context of cultural change in Ceylon, that in the smooth process of secularisation, Pelpola will slowly continue to accept the new blessing of an inventive world in matters of consumption and health by subordinating norms and modifying them. Indian village studies would profit by the study Prof. Ryan has made and we think that Prof. Ryan and his colleagues have done a good job. The question that will always remain unanswered is how far one village can be regarded typical or a-typical, but that is a problem of methodology and will remain unsolved till a better approach than the microcosmic shoots out of the anvil.

E. T.

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